



**Indiana State Department of Agriculture
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Specialty Crop Block Grant Program 2014 Final Report
1/25/17**

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Project Title: Using QR Codes to Inform Indiana Consumers and Enhance Use and Sales of Specialty Crops

PROJECT SUMMARY

[Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.]

Today's specialty crop shopper is expected to make fast and accurate food decisions on the move. They often lack even basic information on how to select, prepare or store these important perishable products. Grocery stores routinely lack adequate decision making information at the point of purchase and farmers at roadside stands and farmers' markets often try but lack the time and educational resources to adequately aid the customer in their decision making process.

This project will allow for the development of a modern, relevant, accurate and up to date on line data base that is readily accessed via unique identifiable QR codes. When accessed the consumer would immediately see the following:

- Specialty Crop Name (s)- Common and Latin,
- Nutritional information/Serving size/Yield per unit purchased
- Brief history/Background
- Photos as harvested and in production
- Seasonal availability
- Relevant selection information
- Initial basic preparation/general cooking tips
- Storage –short term and long term (canning, freezing, drying etc)

[Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.]

Consumers at the point of purchase or in the home kitchen or institutional food preparation and dining areas having access to this information would have increase knowledge and confidence and would feel more comfortable in making the best use of such products and overcome resistance to trying something new and different and increasing purchase quantities. This would increase their purchase of these products and increase demand and thereby the supply over time.

[If the project built on a previously funded project with the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB describe how this project complemented and enhanced previously completed work.]

This project is a standalone project and has not been built on any past work. That is not to say that past funded work has not benefitted from this project...Quite the contrary. The Hoosier Harvest Market Food Hub which grew out of Specialty Crop Block grant funds now enjoys a connection from the e-commerce site to the FoodLink site which allows shoppers instant access to information relevant to specific crops at the ecommerce point of purchase.

PROJECT APPROACH

[Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the Work Plan of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.]

Note: The non-italicized text below is what was submitted in the initial grant application as the projected work plan at that time... The italicized text below each entry is a more accurate description of what actually occurred.

January-February 2014- Website Development Etc. (County Educator/steering committee)

- Register a URL/ Develop a logo
- Interview/select web developer

The selection of a web designer fell to Purdue Ag Communications and the development of a URL and Logo followed in relatively fast pace. The logo has been updated to include the words “Purdue Extension” so as to avoid confusion with a few other FoodLinks which exist across the United States today (with very different functions).

February 2014- (County Educator/Project manager/steering committee)

- Develop job description/Identify/hire Project Manager.
- Establish specialty crop list and desired informational content on each
- Set up Facebook page and Twitter account to communicate w farmers/consumers.

Every effort was made to engage a large and diverse steering committee. This committee met a couple of times to chart the course for the project and from those committee members specific tasks were then addressed by various members of that committee. A draft specialty crop list was adopted from an existing list developed by Purdue and ISDA some years ago to aid the consumer in knowing when Indiana crops are typically available for purchase. No social media accounts were created specifically for FoodLink. Instead existing listserves were used for communication purposes and a newsletter was developed to reach out to enrolled farmers and markets (and others). Many Facebook posts regarding Foodlink content have been posted throughout the growing season by Purdue Extension and others across Indiana.

March-November 2014- Develop/ aggregate/format informational content (Project manager w/County Educator/steering committee)

- Monthly meetings to guide /aid project manager.
- Develop/proof content/design/assign QR codes/PLU codes to each product
- Attend farmers’ markets/ farmer workshops/engage media to provide info about technology and available resources to facilitate awareness and adoption.
- Develop YouTube video to demonstrate use of QR code and resources available.

Monthly webinars and conference calls were held throughout the first half of 2016 during the development phase, Workflow and Dashboard were developed, content manager was hired part time to enter content, and expert reviewers were identified and made aware of the workflow process. QR codes were designed for each of the initial 43 specialty crops (that list now exceeds fifty entries including fruits, vegetables, herbs etc...) As the content was being developed work began to introduce potential user groups to the emerging tool, MANY sessions were offered at conferences, via webinar, in small in person groups and one on one to introduce the tool to a variety of potential user groups. Additionally many articles were written and collaborated on. Three dozen short YouTube videos were developed to introduce the public to how to select, prepare and serve the majority of the specialty crops. Needless to say... this part of the process took FAR longer than anyone would have expected... for this reason we are appreciative of the grant extension. What we lack in funding needed to launch a major project like this we made up for with a longer window of time to develop content and spread the word. Serious challenges

were seen with conflicting information regarding the adoption of recipes from a variety of sources to incorporate into FoodLink. This was finally resolved and permission was received to incorporate USDA, Oregon and Michigan state sourced recipes.

October- December- Market the Project (*County Educator/Project manager/steering committee*)

- Market via newspaper, local events etc.
- Distribute initial marketing materials to farmers markets and other relevant points of purchase.
- Assess initial resource access by consumers/farmers.

As described above... this process took FAR longer than anticipated and continues at this writing. The development and delivery of Fast Start kits for various user groups with relevant promotional materials was handled through the education store which reacted to an enrollment process that can be accessed via the website. Google analytics allows for the tracking of use of the website and to date has been the primary means (other than anecdotal) of assessing impact and reach of the FoodLink tool.

[If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.]

No crops other than those officially listed in the USDA SCBG website as specialty crops benefitted from any funds committed to this project. Crops remaining in the development “pipeline” are all specialty crops by the official definition

[Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.]

Purdue Agricultural Communications department contributed to the success of this project in a monumental manner in the development and delivery of promotional materials... banners, rack cards, post cards, Fast Start kits, POS QR code cards, trifold displays etc. Other ag com staff were engaged and went above and beyond to develop a dashboard for data entry and workflow management and developed and refined the website to give it a clean, bright, modern and user friendly interface that is accessible by home /office computer, tablets and is designed with responsive design principles to provide for mobile device access.

Indiana WIC stepped up as a true partner to help spread the word state wide to reach out to 30,000 WIC recipients.

Many other partners helped to review content for horticultural and nutritional accuracy and continue in this role today as content expands and to help in the development of videos to help users visualize food preparation techniques that are better seen than only described.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

[Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.]

Note: non-italicized text below represents the projected outcomes and all italicized font represents actual outcomes

1. An information platform (website) with the potential to reach all market sectors (retail, restaurant, institutional, and wholesale) will be designed, developed and put into use for the later part of the

2014 growing season. This platform will be accessible by October of the 2014 growing season and will remain accessible in subsequent years.

Clearly this process took longer than anyone would have initially imagined. While the FoodLink tool could have gone “live” in the fall of 2015. It was though best to seek a grant extension, to more fully build out the FoodLink content, enhance marketing of the tool over the winter and then enjoy a full year of derived benefit and measurement of the tool’s adoption and use during the 2016 growing season. The Foodlink tool has more than the projected number of specialty crop entries and the growth in expert reviewed content continues and will continue in to 2017 and beyond. This tool is a stand-alone tool that will require little if any routine maintenance and will be available for use for the foreseeable future by any number of current and future audiences in formal or informal learning/use environments.

2. 500 consumers will access and derive benefit through increased access to accurate research based information about specialty crops from the information platform in 2014*. Consumer participation will be tracked via Google analytics and QR code analytics software which will actively reflect their participation on a weekly basis.

Participating consumers/shoppers will be asked in a Qualtrics on line survey if/how the service influenced enhanced their shopping experience and/ or increased their knowledge of specialty crop selection, use, storage etc...and will or will not lead to a more favorable home or institutional use experience and perhaps increased use and purchases of specialty crops.

The response to FoodLink has been very good but it is challenging to report actual impact... change in knowledge, change in behavior, change in awareness etc.

Google Analytics reports that for the time elapsed between January 1, 2016 and October 24, 2016 (10 months) that there have been 6,279 visits to the site with 24,987 page views originating from essentially every state in the United States with the predominance originating from Indiana and adjacent states. Peak U.S. cities of use include Indianapolis (34%), Chicago (12%), South bend (8%), Lafayette (8%), Ft. Wayne (7%), Louisville,(6%), Terra Haute and Evansville(4%) of the total use.

Approx. 71% of users are new users with the balance of nearly 29% being return users.

Over 54% of Users are accessing from a desktop computer, over 40% from a mobile device and the balance from tablets. Users found the FoodLink Website 47% direct, 35% organic and over 17 % by referral. Within Indiana the predominant city of use was Indianapolis with over 18%, followed closely by West Lafayette and then Greenfield, Fort Wayne and Columbus and nearly 51% from all other Indiana cities.

Social media networks sending the most referrals were predominantly Facebook (majority), and twitter.

Referrers included Sheeringafarm.com, WLFI.com, Localfoodmarketplace.com, Purdueagcommunication.formstack.com, Insideindianabusiness.com, and Indianagrown.org. Peak months of use included May, June and July

3. 25 Market masters and farmers will increase their ability to share relevant information with consumers and increase sales of specialty crops and document increased income and sustainability by using the platform. Market Masters will be surveyed (Qualtrics survey) in perception/reports any increase in shopper knowledge/satisfaction/sales, farmer and market masters satisfaction and will request of the market master anecdotal feedback on reported consumer benefit and satisfaction.

As of this writing FoodLink enrollees are found in 62 of Indiana’s 92 counties (68%) of all Indiana Counties. Additionally Fast Start Educator kits were distributed to every county extension office in the state. 38 major (multifarmer) Farmers’ markets were actively enrolled in FoodLink and had received Fast Start kits appropriate for that market type. 29 roadside markets / on farm markets were

enrolled and had been shipped appropriate Fast Start materials. 8 independent grocery stores were enrolled and had received a retailer Fast start kits. Materials to support proper display of QR code cards were developed and shared with this market type. 11 counties with WIC/Institutional focus were enrolled (30,000 rack cards distributed to individual WIC recipients.

Numerous presentations were made across Indiana both in person and via webinar regarding the availability and use of Foodlink during 2016.

Thousands of postcards to farmers and 3 electronic Newsletters to current and potential enrollees were distributed during the 2016 growing season.

4. Information will be gathered and/or created on all traditionally grown Indiana specialty crops. This information will be put in a format that will be accessible by on the go consumers on a mobile optimized web site accessible via QR code use by their smartphone.

At this writing there are expert reviewed (1 horticulture review and one nutrition review each) available to public users for 13 fruits, 30 vegetables, and honey- 44 entries total. Each provides access to users including:

- Specialty Crop Name (s)- Common and Latin,*
- Nutritional information/Serving size/Yield per unit purchased*
- Brief history/Background*
- Photos as harvested and in production*
- Seasonal availability*
- Relevant selection information*
- Initial basic preparation/general cooking tips*
- Storage –short term and long term (canning, freezing, drying etc)*
- Possible pairings with other seasonally available foods*
- Food safety tips*
- Recipes for home use-Simple and more advanced*
- Links to You-Tube videos to illustrate basic use, preparation and storage techniques*

- Other work product now available both on line and via the Purdue Education Store:*
- Rack card ready for any market vendor to use at the market as well as the FNP educators to give to families with EBT, WIC, SNAP etc.*
- Retail sign (laminated)*
- Post card*
- “Bumper” sticker/ box labels*
- Produce Point of Sale QR cards- regular point of sale and Customizable (on line only) point of sale QR codes.*

Materials are made available in three Fast Start kits- Farmers’ markets, Retail and Educator.

All materials are accessible for free download via mobile device or home/office computer or can be shipped directly to enrollees.

All expert reviewed fact sheets are available for free download as a printable PDF.

[If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.]
No long-term outcomes were projected.

[Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.]

This is a new project and no other similar tool existed by which we could establish a suitable benchmark.

The content displayed in the next entry and in our 10 month reach to various audiences should provide measurable progress toward achieving our desired targets.

Future surveys of each user group will be expected to provide additional insight into the project's reach.

[Highlight the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms.]

62 of Indiana's 92 counties (67%) is participating in FoodLink at some level... some counties more than others and some with one audience or venue and others with several. Currently there are

38 Major Farmer Market enrolled –Fast start kits distributed to each

29 Roadside/ On Farmer Markets Enrolled–Fast start kits distributed to each

8 Independent Groceries Enrolled–Fast start kits distributed to each

92 county educator teams received information about FoodLink–Fast start kits distributed to each

Dozens of in person presentations and webinar based presentations were delivered for various audiences across Indiana to introduce them to FoodLink, resources available and how to enroll.

3 e-newsletters created and distributed to hundreds of current and prospective enrollees.

Hundreds of postcards mailed to farmers and marketers of all types to make them aware of the tool and its importance to them.

30,000 rack cards distributed via Indiana WIC to each WIC participant in the state.

Contacts made to numerous grocery stores

11 Counties have Institutional/ WIC Enrollments

44 twice expert reviewed entries including 13 fruit, 30 vegetables and Honey

Additional entries will include a dozen herbs and additional fruits and vegetables,

257 recipes were selected for ease of preparation, high likelihood of success, few ingredients. This include vetted recipes on the website and also links/"pins" to Pinterest based recipes.

30 videos were created and embedded into the individual entries to help the user see/"experience" the actual preparation and use tools and techniques.

Resources available to farmers (and others) by enrollment and afterwards via the Purdue Education Store include:

- Retail (laminated sign) (directly downloadable from website)
- Post card (directly downloadable from website)
- Rack card (directly downloadable from website)
- Bumper sticker/ fast start kit label (directly downloadable from website)
- 6 ft Vinyl Banner
- Produce Point of Sale QR codes
 - Standard point of sale (directly downloadable from website)
 - Customizable Point of sale (directly downloadable from website)
 - Raw QR code (directly downloadable from website)

All expert reviewed entries can be downloaded and printed at will as a PDF.

BENEFICIARIES

[Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.]

Indiana WIC, Food Pantries, Community Gardens, Farmers' markets', Roadside Stands, On Farm Markets, farmers wholesaling product, Local Grocery Stores, Purdue Extension Educators, Agriculture and natural Resources (ANR), Health and Human Sciences (HHS), Community Wellness Coordinators (CWCs) etc

Additionally we partnered with WIC offices across Indiana, Food pantries, Food Banks, Community Gardens and a variety of educators at all levels formal and informal.

Of course our target audience is the producer/ marketer and the consumers they are interacting with... while we know who some of them are we have yet to develop a suitable tool to assess actual dollars gained or attitudes, awareness, knowledge or behaviors changed. This will be one of our next priorities.

[Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.]

Where is FoodLink being used?

Google Analytics reports that for the time elapsed between January 1, 2016 and October 24, 2016 (10 months) that there have been 6,279 visits to the site with 24,987 page views originating from essentially every state in the United States with the predominance originating from Indiana and adjacent states. Peak U.S. cities of use include Indianapolis (34%), Chicago (12%), South Bend (8%), Lafayette (8%), Ft. Wayne (7%), Louisville (6%), Terra Haute and Evansville (4%) of the total use.

Approx. 71% of users are new users with the balance of nearly 29% being return users.

Over 54% of Users are accessing from a desktop computer, over 40% from a mobile device and the balance from tablets. Users found the FoodLink Website 47% direct, 35% organic and over 17 % by referral. Within Indiana the predominant city of use was Indianapolis with over 18%, followed closely by West Lafayette and then Greenfield, Fort Wayne and Columbus and nearly 51% from all other Indiana cities.

Our continued work will better quantify economic impact for marketers as well as awareness, attitudinal, knowledge and behavioral change of the consumer.

Who are the Beneficiaries of Foodlink?

38 Major Farmer Market Masters (and the vendors they serve) who enrolled –Fast start kits distributed to each with enough FoodLink Point of Sale information for 10 of their Specialty Crop vendors as well as banners and signage for the market.

29 Roadside/ On Farmer Markets Enrolled–Fast start kits distributed to each with Point of Sale cards and promotional materials for their customers.

8 Independent Groceries Store enrolled–Fast start kits distributed to each Grocer with Point of sale information to be used to engage customers. Each received information about how to use FoodLink in their displays effectively.

92 county educator teams received information about FoodLink–Fast start kits distributed to each along with basic power points and information to share with their various user groups within their respective county.

Dozens of in person presentations and webinar based presentations were delivered for various audiences across Indiana to introduce them to FoodLink, resources available and how to enroll. Audiences included homemakers, Indiana Farm Bureau, Vegetable Growers organizations, Master Gardeners, 4-H clubs, FACS teachers among many others.

10 Food and Consumer Science Teachers have enrolled in FoodLink and have received a basic Educator kit of relevant materials to share with students as they incorporate Foodlink in their

classrooms as a way to motivate students to learn about specialty crops and making healthy food choices.

13 Community Gardens/ Food Pantries across Indiana have enrolled in FoodLink and are using received materials to inform their clientele about how to make good food choices and how to incorporate donated specialty crops into their family's diet in a manner that is consumed and enjoyed rather than wasted.

3 seasonal e-newsletters created and distributed to hundreds of current and prospective enrollees.

Hundreds of postcards mailed to farmers and marketers of all types to make them aware of the tool and its importance to them.

30,000 rack cards distributed via Indiana WIC to each WIC participant in the state. These cards were directly distributed (in many cases along with WIC Farmers' market Vouchers) to encourage the access to information about the produce they were securing with their WIC vouchers to foster better use of those purchases.

Contacts made to numerous grocery stores (to date Foodlink has only been adopted by smaller independent grocers) WIC recipients received access to 257 recipes which were selected for ease of preparation, high likelihood of success, few ingredients. This include vetted recipes on the website and also links/"pins" to Pinterest based recipes.

11 Counties have Institutional/ WIC Enrollments and are able to help their clientele make good, quick and healthful food choices for their families.

Specialty Crop farmers, roadside market vendors, market masters, on farm marketers, grocery store produce managers, Food Hubs, CSAs etc received through enrollment and afterwards via the Purdue Education Store access to the following to promote their crops and increase their sales to customers:

- Retail (laminated sign) (directly downloadable from website)
- Post card (directly downloadable from website)
- Rack card (directly downloadable from website)
- Bumper sticker/ fast start kit label (directly downloadable from website)
- 6 ft Vinyl Banner
- 30 YouTube videos created and embedded into the individual specialty crop entries to help all users see/"experience" the actual preparation and use tools and techniques.
- Produce Point of Sale QR codes
 - Standard point of sale (directly downloadable from website and in hard copy)
 - Customizable Point of sale (directly downloadable from website)
 - Raw QR code (directly downloadable from website)

All expert reviewed entries can be downloaded and printed at will as a PDF by the farmer, schoolteacher or community garden coordinator.

LESSONS LEARNED

[Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.]

We encountered a variety of challenges along the development process....including trademark issue, copy write permissions, and all of the expected and unexpected challenges that come when developing a tool that is the first of its kind and seeks to provide instantaneous access by the consumer to expert reviewed information at the point of purchase through a link via QR code from the real world to the virtual world... Teaching users how to display the codes and what it takes to read them and access and use the resources

has been a slow and sometimes arduous process but this is offset by the interest and excitement that users have expressed in being able to access this information quickly.

Additionally the “people” challenge of choreographing the very different skill sets of very talented individuals who are already over committed to other projects was challenging and at the same time rewarding. The talent that came to the table included those with content development and entry skills, website development skills, videography, editing, video talent, expert reviewers for both nutritional content and horticultural accuracy, marketers, graphic designers and numerous educators and partners across Indiana who aided in the delivery of the content. I remain impressed by what was accomplished by this eclectic group in a reasonably short time in a very frugal manner.

[Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.]

We were very pleased and excited to learn of the MANY uses for FoodLink that we had not anticipated... While we assumed that the primary use would have been at the point of sale... where producer/marketer meets the consumer...we have since learned of FoodLink being used in an educational capacity at a variety of formal and informal places of education... from day care, 4-H clubs, grade school, educational booths in many venues, FACS classrooms and even in WIC offices, displays at farmers’ markets, food banks, food pantries and even an Indiana Food Hub...

[If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.]

Due to the availability of Google analytics, enrollments and informal reports from across Indiana it is relatively easy to demonstrate the level of use of Foodlink and relative adoption rate.

Sadly because of the late start in launching the Foodlink tool we were to date unable to secure any survey data to assess user changes in behavior, knowledge, awareness or attitudes. Our hope is to distribute individualized Qualtrics surveys to various user groups...educators, consumers, retailers, farmers market masters etc. in the very near future to not only better understand the scope of these changes but also to allow us to identify and address deficiencies and barriers to use in the coming growing season.

Due to the huge number of possible entries for some specific crops e.g. apples... the idea of including PLU codes in conjunction with the QR codes became essentially impossible... PLU codes were not associated with QR codes due to this challenge.

[Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).]

This entire effort has been a learning process for all involved. Little of what actually transpired during the development process could realistically have been anticipated at the outset... Much of the anticipated goals were met despite the fact that this is a VERY new type of tool that has been designed and delivered and marketed across Indiana from scratch. I can only say that the success of the project has been a direct result of the commitment of a LOT of individuals who stepped up, owned a piece of the development or marketing process and delivered a product that was crafted to work with the other pieces delivered by others. I think the future is bright for this tool in a number of capacities.... From produce vendors...large and small to consumers of specialty crops of all types across the United States and by users who we would not have initially envisioned or anticipated, school teachers, 4-H clubs, youth scavenger hunts,

educational displays at farmers markets and other community event, food pantries, food banks, food hubs and others.

As with anything under development with a lot of moving parts and contributors with very busy schedules... one can anticipate that there some communication and workflow issues but they were overcome as time went along for the benefit of the project. All in all I am VERY pleased with the results to date, the potential the project has for a bright future, the reception that it has had form various user groups and the cooperative spirit I have encountered with the MANY talented people I have had the pleasure to work with –both within and outside of Indiana border in this project’s development.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All relevant documentation and content can be viewed and downloaded at the Purdue Extension FoodLink website. <https://extension.purdue.edu/foodlink/>



FoodLink



BUDGET

Budget- 1st Quarter-Expenses for period 1/1/2014-4-1/2014

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel	\$20,800.00*	\$1,308.86**	\$1,308.86	\$1,308.86
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00			
Contractual				
Construction				
Other	\$150.00			
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$1,308.86	\$1,308.86	\$1,308.86

***This is a temporary employee rather than the consultant identified in the proposal budget as the Data Manager Consultant. Salary @ \$18 per hour. Purdue University payroll is accrual based.**

**** This represents salary ONLY...no fringe benefits are allowed**

Budget-2nd Quarter: Expenses for period 4/1/2014-9/30/2014

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel	\$20,800.00*	\$5358.85**	\$5358.85	\$6667.71
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15650.00			
Contractual				
Construction				
Other	\$150			
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$5358.85	\$5358.85	\$6667.71

***This is a temporary employee rather than the consultant identified in the proposal budget as the Data Manager Consultant. Salary @ \$18 per hour. Purdue University payroll is accrual based.**

**** This represents salary ONLY...no fringe benefits are allowed**

Budget-3rd Quarter: Expenses for period 9/30/2014-1/30/2015

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel	\$20,800.00*	\$2928.86**	\$2928.86	\$9596.57
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00			
Contractual				
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$2928.86	\$2928.86	\$9596.57

Budget- 4th Quarter: Expenses for period 1/30/2015-4/1/2015

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$9105.91**	\$9105.91	\$18702.48
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00	\$236.72	\$236.72	\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00			
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$9342.63	\$9342.63	\$18,939.20

Budget- 5th Quarter: Expenses for period 4/1/2015-7/1/2015

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$2191.40	\$2191.40	\$20,893.88
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00			
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$2191.40	\$2191.40	\$21,130.60

Budget- 6th Quarter: Expenses for period 7/1/2015-10/1/2015

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$0	\$0	\$20,893.88
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00			
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$0	\$0	\$21,130.60

Budget- 7th Quarter: Expenses for period 10/1/2015-12/31/2015

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$0	\$0	\$20,893.88
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00	\$50	\$50	\$50.00
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$0	\$0	\$21,180.60

Budget- 8th Quarter: Expenses for period 12/31/2015-3/31/16

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$0	\$0	\$20,893.88
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00	\$14,276.74	\$14,276.74	\$14326.74
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$14,276.74	\$14,276.74	\$35,457.34

Budget- 9th Quarter: Expenses for period 4/1/2016-6/30/16

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$0	\$0	\$20,893.88**
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$2530.00			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$15,650.00	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$15076.74
Contractual	\$20,800.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$750.00	\$750.00	\$36,207.34

Budget- 10th Quarter: Expenses for period 7/1/2016-10/31/16 (CURRENT/FINAL)

Expenses:	Approved Grant Budget:	Spent this Quarter (include all funds):	Paid from Grant Funds for the Quarter:	Total Spent for Grant Period:
Personnel		\$0	\$0	\$20,893.88**
Fringe Benefits				
Travel	\$236.72			\$236.72
Equipment				
Supplies	\$17943.28	\$2,922.66	\$2,922.66	\$17,999.40
Contractual	\$20,950.00*			
Construction				
Other				
Totals:	\$39,130.00	\$2,922.66	\$2,922.66	\$39,130.00

***This is a temporary employee rather than the consultant identified in the proposal budget as the Data Manager Consultant. Salary @ \$18 per hour. Purdue University payroll is accrual based.**

**** This represents salary ONLY...no fringe benefits are allowed. Jennifer Pinkston approved of budget change**

Website development costs in personnel line item.

CONTACT PERSON

- Name: Roy Ballard
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Project Title: Growing Places Indy

PROJECT SUMMARY

In 2014, the urban farm expansion project successfully transformed 10,000 sq. ft. of unutilized land into a cultivated production area dedicated entirely to growing specialty crops. The project enables GPI to innovatively address both the problems of declining health and well-being in our community and the demand for increased access to specialty crops produced by urban agriculture. The project was a success in all practical terms-- we were able to get the U-Pick Farm and Farm Stand up and running, create educational opportunities, improve access to specialty crops and engage the community. Photos of the site's progress have been uploaded to indyurbanupick.tumblr.com.

ACTIVITIES PERFORMED

GOAL ONE: Education

The farm expansion site and U-Pick were used to increase engagement in educational experiences in the growing of specialty crops and increase consumer knowledge about how to prepare and eat specialty crops. Visitors to the U-Pick were given one-on-one experiences with a GPI farmer who gave advice including how to tell if a crop was ripe, how to pick it, what tools to use, how to store it at home and how to cook or prepare the crop. Participants included farm apprentices, volunteers, U-Pick and Farm Stand visitors, workshop participants and tours.

Workshops

Workshops offered in 2014:

- "Fruiting Crops and Pollination" on May 21, 10 participants
- "Planning Your Fall Garden" on Aug. 13, 6 participants
- "Beekeeping Basics and Hive Assembly" on Sept. 7, 8 participants
- "Lasagna Gardening" on Oct. 5, 12 participants
- "Putting Your Garden to Bed for the Winter" was offered on Sept. 15 but was unattended due to weather conditions.

Total workshop participants: 36. Workshop offerings increased by 50% from 2013 to 2014.

Workshop participation increased by 72% from 2013 to 2014.

Tours

Tours of the U-Pick and Legacy Center farm sites were given to the following groups/organizations:

- Stanley K. Lacy Executive Leadership, April 12
- Cummins employees, May 6
- Local Brownie Girl Scout Troop 2334, April 19
- SmallBox and Digital Relevance, May 18
- Young Life, June 7
- Agroecology students, July 9
- Gala in the Garden, August 10
- Indiana Bar Association, August 11
- Community Health's Outpatient Clinic, August 15

Total tour participants: 48. Tour participation increased by 79% from 2013 to 2014.

Volunteers

The Farm Expansion Apprentice (FEA) worked with ~320 volunteers throughout the season to spread wood chips, leaves and compost to create garden beds and walking paths and/or to transplant, seed, pot up transplants, cultivate and harvest crops, pick up trash and complete other tasks.

- Total volunteer hours: 1,104 hours
- Total FEA hours: 610 hours

Evaluation Survey

An end of season survey (via SurveyMonkey) was distributed via the following communication avenues:

- Social Media: Facebook (2,888 “Likes”), Twitter (1,435 Followers) and Instagram (403 Followers): 4,726 total followers
- Weekly E-newsletter: 3,976 subscribers
- Weekly Volunteer Email List: 525 subscribers

Total audience: 9,227

Results from the survey showed an increase in knowledge about how specialty crops are grown, harvested, stored and prepared. Survey participants suggested we could provide better signage and offer larger quantities of produce. Positive feedback received from the survey indicated that visitors learned or tried something new, had positive interactions with GPI staff and found the farm to be visually appealing. The Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center was awarded \$25,000 from the Summer Youth Program Fund and GPI was awarded \$7,500 from the Indy Food Fund grant to fund the build out of the outdoor classroom/storage shipping container project on the U-Pick Farm site. Two 40-foot shipping containers were purchased and placed on the expansion site. Ball State University architecture students designed and built the outdoor classroom space, walk-in cooler and farming equipment storage. This space will provide more opportunities next season for onsite classes, demonstrations and other educational experiences.

GOAL TWO: Urban U-Pick Model

GPI created, trialed and showcased a U-Pick farm as a viable model for specialty crop production and distribution in the Indianapolis urban agriculture sector. The U-Pick and Farm Stand were promoted through earned media in the Urban Times, a free neighborhood newspaper, and promotional signage in the surrounding neighborhoods. GPI’s promotional outreach also included:

- Social Media: Facebook (2,888 “Likes”), Twitter (1,435 Followers) and Instagram (403 Followers): 4,726 total followers
- Weekly E-newsletter: 3,976 subscribers
- Weekly Volunteer Email List: 515 subscribers

The U-Pick Farm and Farm Stand opened to the public on June 19, 2014, with weekly hours on Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays 9am-noon at the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center on the near Eastside of downtown Indianapolis. In August, U-Pick and Farm Stand hours were reduced to Thursdays from 4-7pm only, then ended for the season on Thursday, September 4.

Total sales and amounts harvested from this site (June 19 - Sept. 8, with 18 Farm Stand and UPick days total) are as follows:

- U-Pick Sales (visitors harvested their own crops): \$365
- Farm Stand Sales (crops harvested by a farmer from the U-Pick site only): \$388
- Local restaurant sales: \$4,496.75
- TOTAL: \$5,249 (1,289 pounds)

Specialty crops grown included the following: arugula, beets, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, collard greens, cucumbers, eggplant, fennel, green beans, green peppers, husk cherries, jalapenos, kale, lettuce, okra, radishes, spinach, squash, strawberries, Swiss chard and tomatoes. GPI held a family nutrition and cooking class specifically designed to engage parents and kids together. Eight shares of vegetables were given to participants each week for 12 weeks. As the first urban farm specialty crop U-Pick in Indianapolis, no benchmark exists, and our research found no models in neighboring Midwest cities of similar size. GPI will engage Indianapolis urban farmers growing specialty crops through a workshop on year-one findings.

GOAL THREE: Access

GPI increased consumer access to specialty crops, specifically through the U-Pick model. The U-Pick Farm and Farm Stand opened to the public on June 19, 2014, with weekly hours on Thursdays from 4-7pm and Saturdays 9am-noon at the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center on the near east side of downtown Indianapolis. In August, U-Pick and Farm Stand hours were reduced to Thursdays from 4-7pm only, then ended for the season on Thursday, Sept. 4. Hours were reduced to give the crops a chance to grow back (the season was cool and rainy, making it difficult for some crops like tomatoes to keep up with demand) and because attendance dropped when school was back in session.

U-Pick and Farm Stand specialty crop sales and distribution numbers are detailed in the previous section. GPI also accomplished the following goals:

GPI increased local restaurant distribution to 31 total restaurants in 2014 and offered 54 total hours of U-Pick on 18 occasions, thereby achieving 61% increase in specialty crop distribution compared to 2013.

Total specialty crop sales increased by 24.5% in 2014.

Specialty crop varieties increased by 50%.

It is worth noting that visitors to the U-Pick and Farm Stand could purchase produce using their SNAP/ EBT card (food stamps.)

GOAL FOUR: Volume

GPI was able to increase the volume of specialty crops produced at the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center farm sites by harvesting 1,289 total pounds of produce, an 84% increase from 2013. In 2015, GPI plans to add another ~2,000 sq. ft. to this project, located behind the Legacy Center.

BENEFICIARIES

Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

GPI was able to host educational workshops, farm tours and volunteer activities at the site. In total, we worked with 400 individuals throughout the season who had a direct contact with the site that involved some type of hands on work. Furthermore, we were able to model our U Pick and on site Farm Stand models to more than 5 other urban farms who are considering such a model at their sites.

Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

As stated above, the number of beneficiaries who had a direct educational experience with us was more than 400 people. We also had more than 1,000 beneficiaries who had an indirect experience with us by shopping at our farm stand, attending our U Pick or picking up at CSA at the site. Furthermore, produce from the site was distributed and sold to more than 30 local restaurants and shops in Indianapolis.

LESSONS LEARNED

Weather delayed the construction of the farm by a few weeks in the spring. During the bustling harvest season, limitations on time made some of the goals harder to reach than others. Preand post-participation surveys were difficult to execute because of limited time, participants arriving at different points during the workshop or event, etc. We did submit a broader, postseason survey and received results from a small audience. After an informal poll of other local growers, we decided not to hold a workshop dedicated to the U-Pick model but to disperse information via informal, one-on-one conversations instead. U-Pick and Farm Stand hours were reduced to give the crops a chance to grow back (the season was cool and rainy, making it difficult for some crops, like tomatoes, to keep up with demand) and because attendance dropped when school was back in session.

FUTURE PROJECT PLANS

GPI will continue to offer low-cost, interactive Farm Stand and U-Pick opportunities in 2015. Two 40 foot shipping containers were purchased and placed on the expansion site. Ball State University architecture students designed and built the outdoor classroom space, walk-in cooler, and farming equipment storage. This space will provide more opportunities next season for onsite classes, demonstrations, and other educational experiences. In 2015, GPI plans to add another ~2,000 sq. ft. to this project, located behind the Chase Near Eastside Legacy Center.

CONTACT PERSON

Name: Tyler Henderson

Email: tyler@growingplacesindy.org

(Budget below)

BUDGET

2014 ISDA Financial Tracking								
Category	Item(s)	Date	Vendor	Quarter	Method	Spent	Allotted	Balance
Contracting								
Urban Farm Apprentice	Quarter 1 Contract.	27-Jan-10	Kate Franzman	1	Check	\$5,000.00	\$20,000.00	(\$500.00)
	Quarter 2 Contract.	26-Apr-10	Kate Franzman	2	Check	\$5,000.00		
	Quarter 3 Contract.	6-Jul-10	Kate Franzman	3	Check	\$5,500.00		
	Quarter 4 Contract.	9-Oct-10	Kate Franzman	4	Check	\$5,000.00		
Total:						\$20,500.00	\$20,000.00	(\$500.00)
Supplies								
Drip Tape	Irrigation Supplies	22-May-10	Drip Works	2	CC	\$615.67	\$500.00	(\$115.67)
Season Extension Supplies	Low Tunnel Supplies	25-Mar-10	Lowe's	2	CC	\$70.90	\$1,500.00	\$285.53
		7-Jul-10	Lowe's	3	CC	\$50.56		
		25-Jul-10	Johnny's	3	CC	\$135.00		
		26-Jul-10	Lowe's	3	CC	\$122.89		
		26-Jul-10	Menard's	3	CC	\$79.72		
		22-Sep-10	Johnny's	4	CC	\$244.70		
		7-Oct-10	Johnny's	4	CC	\$510.70		
Stakes/Trellis	Stakes	12-Jun-10	Lowe's	2	CC	\$736.00	\$600.00	(\$136.00)
Volunteer Supplies	Snacks	24-Mar-10	Angelo's	2	CC	\$13.00	\$500.00	\$171.78
	Snacks	25-Mar-10	Angelo's	2	CC	\$14.00		
	Snacks	2-Apr-10	Angelo's	2	CC	\$17.99		
	Snacks	9-Jun-10	Zesco	2	CC	\$50.11		
	Snacks	11-Jun-10	Angelo's	3	CC	\$17.67		
	Snacks	9-Aug-10	City Market	4	CC	\$53.74		
	Snacks	23-Oct-10	The Garden Ctr	4	CC	\$39.00		
	Snacks	7-Nov-10	Pizzology	4	CC	\$122.71		
Total:						\$2,894.36	\$3,100.00	\$205.64
Construction								
Wood Chip/Compost Moving							\$200.00	\$200.00
Total:							\$200.00	\$200.00
Other								
Specialty Crop Starts/Seeds	Transplants	21-Jan-10	Nourse Farm	1	CC	\$515.20	\$1,300.00	(\$278.25)
	Potting Medium	3-Feb-10	Carl Brehob	1	CC	\$134.25		
	Seeds	12-Apr-10	Johnny's	2	CC	\$217.80		
	Seeds	29-Jun-10	Whole Foods	3	CC	\$9.49		
	Seeds	15-Jul-10	Garden Center	3	CC	\$32.08		
	Seeds	22-Jul-10	Garden Center	3	CC	\$39.98		
	Seeds	25-Jul-10	Johnny's	3	CC	\$369.50		
	Seeds	22-Sep-10	Johnny's	4	CC	\$99.95		
	Seed Garlic	5-Nov-10	Full Hand Farm	4	Check	\$160.00	Check 1432	
Compost/Cover Crop/Amendments	Poultry Manure	19-Mar-10	One Sky Ag	1	Check	\$100.00	\$4,100.00	\$323.00
	Compost	19-Mar-10	Green Cycle	1	CC	\$677.00		
	Compost	24-Mar-10	Gardens/Growth	2	Check	\$600.00		
	Compost	11-May-10	Green Cycle	2	CC	\$502.50		
	Compost	18-May-10	Green Cycle	2	CC	\$247.50		
	Compost	27-May-10	Green Cycle	2	CC	\$125.00		
	Compost	8-Jun-10	Green Cycle	2	CC	\$270.00		
	Compost	21-Jul-10	Green Cycle	3	CC	\$555.00		
	Compost	12-Aug-10	Green Cycle	3	CC	\$185.00		
	Compost	2-Sep-10	Green Cycle	3	CC	\$185.00		
	Compost	10-Sep-10	Green Cycle	3	CC	\$185.00		
	Compost	15-Sep-10	Green Cycle	3	CC	\$145.00		
Yard Signs	Signs	5-Jun-10	Signarama	2	CC	\$400.00	\$2,000.00	(\$155.42)
	Signs	8-Jun-10	Grow Tech	2	CC	\$375.42		
	Signs	15-Jun-10	Signarama	2	CC	\$180.00		
	Signs	30-Aug-10	Sarah Mullin	3	Check	\$1,200.00		
Additional Prom. Materials	Sign Materials	12-Jun-10	Lowe's	2	CC	\$277.74	\$1,000.00	\$205.03
	Sign Materials	28-Jun-10	Lowe's	3	CC	\$74.91		
	Sign Materials	11-Aug-10	Amazon	3	CC	\$106.99		
	Sign Materials	30-Sep-10	Leanne Brown	4	CC	\$116.00		
	Sign Materials	1-Oct-10	Indy Reads	4	CC	\$162.33		
	Sign Materials	27-Oct-10	Cash and Carry	4	CC	\$57.00		
Total:						\$8,305.64	\$8,400.00	\$94.36
Grant Total:							\$31,700.00	\$0.00
			Quarter 4 Reimbursement:			\$6,566.13		

Project Title: ICDC Direct to Retail Study

PROJECT SUMMARY

[Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.]

The ways in which food reaches the consumer vary widely between local food systems and the conventional global industrial food system. The development of refrigerated trucking, in combination with subsidized fuel costs and changes to methods of harvesting and transporting food, enable conventional food to be shipped over very long distances at fairly low cost to producers. The conventional food system also heavily relies upon centralized processing and packaging facilities that are often located far from the grower and the consumer. Local food systems value a shorter distribution distance between grower/producer and consumer. In addition, local food systems often cut out the middlemen involved in processing, packaging, transporting, and selling food. The value of specialty crops in Indiana is \$307.9 million (NASS, Cash Receipts by Commodities and Commodity Groups Indian, 2009-2011).

Local food production-distribution networks often start on smaller, sustainable family farms. Farm products are transported over shorter geographic distances, generally processed either on the farm itself, or with smaller processors. Sustainable/local food distribution networks rely on two primary markets: the direct-to-consumer market and the direct-to-retail, foodservice, and institution market.

The direct-to-consumer market is currently the most established sector of specialty crop distribution. Common direct-to-consumer operations include: 1) Farmers' Markets; 2) Community Supported Agriculture; and 3) Other Direct to Consumer Programs, i.e. pick-your-own, on-site farm stands, etc.

A growing component of local food systems are programs that provide specialty crop products directly to retail, foodservice, and institutions. These types of programs cut out the middlemen involved in storing, processing, and/or transporting food destined for grocery (and other retail) stores, restaurants, schools, hospitals, and other institutions.

Direct to retail, foodservice, and institution programs may involve farmers delivering specialty crops directly to these establishments, or may rely upon a "aggregation and distribution facility operation," which is a centralized location where many farmers drop off their farm products for distribution amongst multiple establishments.

Evidence indicates that local food systems support local economies. In addition, food grown locally, processed locally, and distributed locally (for example, to local restaurants) generates jobs and subsequently helps stimulate local economies.

Although local and regional food systems are growing, there are a number of barriers to their creation and expansion. First, as a result of the consolidation of food processing, small, specialty crop producers may have difficulty finding a local food processor (e.g., canner, bottler, commercial kitchen, etc.) for added-value farm products. Second, as large corporate entities begin to capitalize on the "local" moniker, small farmers may have difficulty competing with large-scale producers with large-scale marketing apparatuses. Farmers may have logistical problems finding reliable and convenient transport for their specialty crops, especially during the growing season. Finally, small, specialty crop producer are often unable to sell to retail institutions due to inability to fulfill quantity order requirements.

As the demand for local, fresh specialty crops continues to grow, innovative programs to help small farmers bring their farm products to market are also expanding. One increasingly common solution to the logistical, transportation, and marketing challenges faced by small family farmers is the creation of local and regional “aggregation and distribution facility operations.” The USDA describes a aggregation and distribution facility operation as the “drop off point for multiple farmers and a pick up point for distribution firms and customers that want to buy source-verified local and regional food.” Some aggregation and distribution facility operations also provide transportation of farm products directly to retail, restaurant, and institutional customers. Aggregation and distribution facility operations take much of the burden of marketing and transportation from local farmers by finding viable consumers, and provide other business-related services, such as logistical coordination. In addition, they often provide refrigerated storage facilities and auxiliary services such as commercial kitchens and light food processing. Aggregation and distribution facility operations can expand the market reach of small, local, specialty crop farmers, help create local jobs, and can expand access to fresh, local food in urban and suburban markets.

[Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.]

According to the Natural Foods Merchandiser and Nutrition Business Journal, sales of fresh fruits and vegetables at natural foods stores increased 13% on average in 2013, bringing sales to over \$5.9 billion. The industry has seen tremendous growth in the past ten years as consumers become more health conscious and place more emphasis on healthy eating. This trend can be seen around the country as natural foods stores have been opening at a rapid pace.

Food cooperatives have also seen tremendous growth during this time period as well. According to Stuart Reid with Food Co-op Initiative the interest in new food cooperatives has been strong in the past four years. Many established cooperatives have spent considerable capital in remodeling existing stores and opening up new locations to keep up with the increasing consumer demand. The largest Indiana food cooperative, Bloomingfoods, has grown and currently has five locations in Bloomington and a farmers’ market associated with the co-op. Tom Rodmyre, general manager of Cooperative Partners Warehouse, a distributor to many food cooperatives located in the Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN area, stated that most of their growth in food co-op sales has come from store expansions and new branch locations from established co-ops.

The Nutrition Business Journal estimates sales of natural and organic food and beverages to increase by 12% for the next three years, with these segments accounting for 10% of total food sales by 2017. Although the market is expected to grow, competition is likely to remain a significant force, which should continue to pressure profit margins for natural foods retailers.

If realized, the projected growth will create opportunities for distributors to increase sales, but margin pressure could flow through to distributors. Large lower cost distributors stand to gain the most in the current environment, as they are the best positioned to compete on price. However, some smaller distributors will be able to compete and grow, just as the food cooperatives have been able to differentiate and capitalize on market niches. Smaller distributors will be able to capitalize on the weaknesses of the larger distributors, such as offering superior customer service.

PROJECT APPROACH

[Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the Work Plan of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.]

GOALS	ACCOMPLISHMENTS
Identification of existing specialty crop production and marketing and projected capacity.	Conducted buyer and grower interviews and evaluated existing infrastructure and projected capacity
Identification of demand for regionally grown specialty crops in food co-ops and determine status of current demands. Identify potential facility location.	Conducted buyer and grower interviews and evaluated existing infrastructure and projected capacity; Developed location and logistics requirements
Identify staffing and logistics needs	Developed location and logistics requirements; Identified leading business models; Reviewed required management and personnel system
Identify state and local laws and rules relating to food aggregation and distribution pertaining to specialty crops	Evaluated local and state laws, rules and ordinances
Develop framework for aggregation/distribution facility and framework for management	Identified leading business models; Developed location and logistics requirements; Reviewed required management and personnel system
Develop framework for marketing strategies	Reviewed required management and personnel system; Evaluated role for e- commerce
Business Plan	
Business description	Identified leading business models
Market Analysis	Conducted buyer and grower interviews; conducted secondary research on the locally grown specialty crop industry, cooperatives
Organization and Management	Reviewed required management and personnel system; Determined facility function, scale, and equipment; Evaluated local and state laws, rules and ordinances
Marketing and Sales	Evaluated role for e- commerce
Financial Projections	Developed capitalization strategy; Developed pro forma performance expectations

[Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.]

Purdue University and Indiana Farm Bureau helped develop RFP criteria and also reviewed and determined the final contractor. Purdue Extension Educators helped identify producers to be interviewed. Food co-ops also helped identify producers as well as distributors to be interviewed.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

[Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.]

The contractor used a combination of on-the-ground interviews with major stakeholders, research on the major sectors, and an assessment of key factors for success of such a facility to ascertain feasibility and define the requirements for the project to be feasible. This analysis fed into the development of a comprehensive business plan that elaborated relevant aspects of the business in terms of ownership structure, scale, location, and other variables.

To determine the feasibility of a specialty crop aggregation and distribution facility, an assessment was conducted of the demand for the facility's services and an adequate supply of product for the facility. Issues of seasonality, volume needs, inventory turns, quality expectations, product variety, and vendor relationships will be explored. Interviews will be conducted with food co-op general managers and produce managers in Indiana to explore local specialty crop demand and existing supply chains. While food co-op distribution will be the primary focus, key retail buyers that are exploring expanded local sourcing of specialty crops will also be consulted to further evaluate demand. Local sourcing alternatives, as well as measures of competing sources of supply beyond the region were explored. Attributes other than local, such as organic, were also evaluated.

Interviews were conducted with leading specialty crop growers in Indiana and the region. These growers were identified from among existing food co-op suppliers, Indiana Horticulture Congress members, and referrals from county Extension educators – particularly those that were involved with MarketReady collaborations around Indiana. A series of interviews with 20 key Indiana producers operating at a scale appropriate to supplying such a venture and/or with relationships already established with food cooperative sector were completed. A larger sample of regional specialty crop producers were approached with a web-based and/or mail survey to gather more quantitative data regionally on marketing services demanded, interest in alternative business models, commercial readiness, and needed production development resources. The producers were identified in collaboration with regional Extension educators, Hort Congress participants, and existing suppliers to food co-ops in Indiana.

Supplier questions focused on issues of production capacity, current market complementarity, season extension opportunities, GAP and other 3rd party audit approaches for product safety assurance, price expectations, on-farm and other post-harvest packing, grading, and storage involvement, and available production support for commercial markets. Distribution logistics options and central aggregation services were included in the interview. One of the possible options for a business structure was a grower ownership. Interest, expectations, and requisite conditions were explored to determine the potential feasibility of such an arrangement during these interviews. Cooperative producer aggregation models such as the Penn's Corner Farm Alliance, store-owned La Montanita DC, Grow Farms subsidiary to Horton Fruit Company and other business organizations were considered in these discussions.

Co-op facilities located in Indiana along with ones located near its borders were interviewed to determine satisfaction with local suppliers and distributors (twelve cooperatives in Indiana were contacted and five were interviewed. Food co-ops located near Indiana's borders were included as well (Common Ground IL, Cooperative Partners in Minnesota).

An exploration of alternative business models and the corresponding supply chain interest were conducted concurrently with the buyer and supplier interviews. Numerous food hub models have been launched nationally with varying degrees of success. Our recent in-depth study of the failure of the Grasshoppers Distribution food hub in Louisville provided a good framework for evaluating the feasibility of a dedicated specialty crops aggregation facility in Indiana. Growers, managers, owners, and customers of Grasshoppers have provided their own perspectives on how such a business could have been ultimately successful.

Identification of a range of business models that could potentially fit with the market, producer base, and distribution logistics for specialty crops in Indiana. Possible business model options explored included

independent grower co-op; subsidiary to existing food co-op; a federated co-op owned and operated by a network of food co-ops; and subsidiary to existing produce wholesaler. Advantages and disadvantages of each will depend on the market, distribution of growers, services provided, competition, potential for scale and scope economies, and capitalization requirements. Grower and buyer interest and support for each model, given a range of scale, location, cost, and product/seasonality parameters need to be evaluated.

An identification and analysis of the competition as well as an assessment of expected competitive response was completed. Commercial food services and area produce wholesalers would likely respond to the arrival of a new entrant.

Determination of the ideal location will depend on several factors. Specialty crop supply chain analysis will play a key role in narrowing a list of potential locations. Business model selection will also play a key role in determining the best location. Key factors that will influence potential location of a facility include the location of major producers, major markets, and concentration; the presence of centers of gravity for trade in produce in the region; presence of major transportation arteries; location of other existing infrastructure.

Identification of specific state and local laws, rules, and ordinances relating to specialty crop aggregation and distribution that would either hinder or support the proposed business will also play a role in the determination of the location were also investigated.

[If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.]

The goals of the project were to prepare a feasibility study and business plan for an aggregation and distribution facility for specialty crops that would serve primarily food co-ops throughout Indiana and perhaps the surrounding region. This was accomplished. However, many of the findings indicate that such a narrow focus would not yield a financially viable business. This report needs to be shared with others (i.e. food co-ops, producers, smaller distributors) to determine if there is a desire to look at expanding both product to be aggregated and distributed and expanding the customer base to other non-cooperative grocery stores, i.e. small health food stores, small independent grocers, etc.

[Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.]

The Goals of the project were to complete a feasibility study and business plan for specialty crop aggregation and distribution center serving Indiana food cooperatives and these goals were accomplished.

[Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.]

GOAL: Increase specialty crop producers' awareness of the benefits and feasibility of an aggregation and distribution facility operation that will allow them to sell to new marketing channels such as food cooperatives.

As a result of interviews and surveys, all participating specialty crop producers had a better understanding of the benefits and feasibility of an aggregation and distribution facility that would allow them to sell to a new marketing channel such as a food coop.

[Highlight the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms.]

To provide context to the USDA data on specialty crop production in the state, KCARD worked with Dr.

Tim Woods, Indiana cooperative extension specialists, and the food cooperatives themselves to identify 20 key Indiana producers operating at a scale appropriate to supplying such a venture and/or with relationships already established with the food cooperative sector. These growers were interviewed to determine their level of interest in a new wholesale distributor and their needs with regard to that distributor. The growers interviewed represent over 4,750 acres of produce.

Most significant among the findings is that generally producers do not see an urgent need for a new distributor. While some producers indicated that they would like another potential market, most growers were content with their current marketing situations. In general, the larger growers interviewed placed more emphasis on higher volume wholesale markets with a small number of crops while smaller growers focused more on retail and direct delivery wholesale markets with a larger variety of specialty crops.

Production was heavily weighted toward traditional produce crops among the producers interviewed. Growers indicated that they are capable of scaling up production and diversifying into other specialty crops if they felt their net farm income would increase as a result.

With regard to producer perception of growth prospects for different marketing channels, producers see more growth on average for various wholesale market channels compared to retail, but at a slow to moderate pace, which is shown in Table 8. Opinions were split, as some producers were planning on only expanding their retail operations, as they indicated the profit margins are much better for those markets. Some producers felt they had “outgrown” farmers markets and were ready to focus more effort on higher volume wholesale markets. Even with farmers outgrowing farmers’ markets, it was surprising to find that the largest percentage of producers anticipated no growth for farmers’ markets. It is possible they see farmers markets as maturing markets, and they do not see the potential to expand.

Food cooperatives across the state of Indiana were interviewed to determine the scale of produce purchases, determine what problems they face in procuring local specialty crops, and gauge interest in a new specialty crop distributor. General Managers and produce managers of these food cooperatives were interviewed. Generally, the responses of these individuals indicated that most food cooperatives have access to seasonal local specialty crops via direct delivery by producers, and the food co-ops value the producer connection and relationships from dealing directly with the producer. Food cooperatives also have multiple choices for sourcing non-local organic and conventional produce items. Food cooperatives interviewed typically utilize more than one distributor to fill their needs and are generally happy with those relationships. Of the twelve food cooperatives operating in the state, five were interviewed.

Food cooperatives surveyed indicated a limited ability to store fresh produce and indicated that much of the produce they sold consisted of items not raised in Indiana, such as avocados, bananas, and citrus.

Local produce accounted for approximately 25% of the current total produce volume. Annual produce sales were approximately \$4.8 million in 2013 for these food cooperatives. Based on these figures, food cooperatives sold approximately \$1.2 million in local produce in 2013.

[Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project’s accomplishments.]

Specialty Crop Producers and food co-ops interviewed were made aware of the benefits of an aggregation and distribution facility that would allow for a new marketing channel. A feasibility study and business

plan outlined and highlighted the feedback from these two groups and also provided information as to the viability of such a facility only selling specialty crops to food co-ops.

[Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.]

The goal of this project was to develop a feasibility study and a business plan for a potential specialty crop aggregation and distribution facility that would serve Indiana's food coops. The information has been compiled and will be shared with those who participated in the project. It will now be up to the private sector to determine if this is a project that should move forward in its anticipated form or if it should be changed to ensure its financial viability.

LESSONS LEARNED

[Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.]

When the project was first envisioned, the environment for an aggregation and distribution facility was looked upon favorably by staff at Bloomingfoods who were consulted regarding the submission of the SCBG application. The application was written, submitted and accepted. The environment and demand for fresh fruits and vegetables sold at natural food stores grew 13% on average in 2013, bringing sales to over \$5.9 billion. Consumers continue to demand locally grown, fresh fruits and vegetables as evidenced by the growth in natural food stores and food co-ops. Although the environment for the creation of additional food co-ops is strong and favorable, a number of unanticipated factors emerged.

Larger chains that previously focused on higher end markets on the East and West Coast cities are now expanding aggressively into the US Midwest. Publicly traded Whole Foods Market currently has 379 stores, but has a goal of eventually expanding to 1,200 stores. Sprouts Farmers Market currently has 172 stores and plans to expand aggressively into the Southeastern US. Natural Grocers by Vitamin Cottage, a publicly traded company, plans to grow to 1,100 stores from its current 76 stores. Fresh Thyme Farmers Market currently is planning 60 new stores in the next five years. Mrs. Greens Neighborhood Market is planning an aggressive expansion in the Northeast and Midwest sections of the US. Walmart is partnering with Wild Oats to bring an organic product line into its stores and hopes to bring the cost of organic foods down by 25%.

As an indication of the potential for growth in the segment, both Whole Foods and Fresh Thyme announced plans in 2014 to expand into Bloomington. These moves by large, rapidly expanding competitors pose challenges to food cooperatives operating at a smaller scale.

An additional unexpected occurrence that impacted Bloomingfoods interest in this project was the unionization of their workers. This event took an incredible amount of management time and energy and they are still trying to work through the ramifications of this event.

As the pie has grown, competition has intensified greatly at the same time. The large sales growth in the past several years has led the larger national chains to expand into new areas of the country where they previously had no presence. According to industry consultant Jay Jacobowitz with Retail Insights, all of the "A" locations are taken and in many cases all of the "B" locations are taken. The large players are pursuing "C" locations. After focusing on the larger metropolitan markets on both US coasts, the larger natural foods retailers are moving into Midwestern US, in reaction to strong consumer demand for natural and organic foods.

Nationally, established food cooperatives are facing new competitors where they were previously did not. This is true in Indiana, where interviews with Indiana food cooperatives revealed that Fresh Thyme, Earth Fare, and Whole Foods Market were either new competitors or will be opening in the near future in key Indiana locations. This was a concern among food cooperative staff interviewed, but many co-ops and

independent grocers have found ways to differentiate themselves and capitalize on niches where the larger competitors are lacking. Food Cooperatives have been able to successfully differentiate themselves as the more authentic “community” or “neighborhood” markets in many cases compared to the larger chain competitors. However, competition is taking a bite out of profit margins. According to the Natural Foods Merchandiser and Nutrition Business Journal study, independent grocer margins have been shrinking as they experience price competition from the larger stores. Independents have been forced to compete on price in some markets, which has included creative features and sales promotions.

The Nutrition Business Journal estimates sales of natural and organic food and beverages to increase by 12% for the next three years, with these segments accounting for 10% of total food sales by 2017.

Although the market is expected to grow, competition is likely to remain a significant force, which should continue to pressure profit margins for natural foods retailers.

If realized, the projected growth will create opportunities for distributors to increase sales, but margin pressure could flow through to distributors. Large lower cost distributors stand to gain the most in the current environment, as they are the best positioned to compete on price. However, some smaller distributors will be able to compete and grow, just as the food cooperatives have been able to differentiate and capitalize on market niches. Smaller distributors will be able to capitalize on the weaknesses of the larger distributors, such as offering superior customer service.

[Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.]

Given the increased competition in the natural foods industry, food co-ops are less likely to want to start a relationship with a new aggregation/distribution organization. Farm branding and telling the producer story is an important marketing technique for local specialty crops, and food cooperatives were uneasy about going through a distributor to get local product as opposed to dealing directly with individual producers for fear of losing important producer connections. Some concern was expressed by food cooperatives that a new cooperatively owned distributor could potentially distribute to businesses competing in the same markets as those food co-ops, which was seen as a negative. While Producers indicated they would be interested if they could make more money by selling to a new distributor, they were genuinely concerned with the potential for hurting their existing wholesale marketing arrangements with brokers and distributors by doing business with a new distributor.

[Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).]

Our initial assumption that an aggregation/distribution facility for specialty crops that would service mainly food co-ops was flawed. The research found that a facility that focused only on selling specialty crops to food co-ops was not economically feasible. While there was some limited interest by producers for a new marketing/distribution channel, there were concerns that a new distributor would be competition to their current arrangements. Food co-ops also expressed concern about losing or diluting the special relationships they currently have with their producers.

CONTACT PERSON

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Project Title: Indy Hunger Network

PROJECT SUMMARY

[Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.]

When we wrote our initial proposal in 2013, SNAP redemption at Indiana farmers' markets lagged significantly behind other states in the Midwest, costing the specialty crop producers who sell at these markets revenue and limiting opportunities for food insecure residents of Indiana to have access to healthy, nutritious, locally-grown food. In 2012, Indiana had only \$30,300 in SNAP sales at farmers' markets, while Minnesota, the next lowest performing Midwest state, had \$149,000 in SNAP sales. Michigan, on the other hand, led the nation with \$1.53 million in SNAP sales in 2012. These statistics suggested that the Indiana specialty crop sector was missing a significant opportunity to substantially increase sales to SNAP beneficiaries.

More than 90,000 Marion County families received more than \$330 million in SNAP benefits in 2012. However, barriers, such as the lack of basic information about farmers' market, lack of capacity at Marion County farmers' markets to accept SNAP, and the lack of a coordinated marketing and outreach plan, have stifled the use of SNAP at farmers' markets in general and on specialty crops at farmers' markets in particular. In 2012, consumers used less than \$3,000 worth of SNAP benefits at Indianapolis farmers' markets. We estimate that approximately \$2,000 went to Indiana specialty crop growers at these markets.

The Indy Hunger Network's goal was to increase sales volume for specialty crop producers at farmers' markets by increasing the usage of SNAP dollars to purchase specialty crop products. Fresh Bucks was developed as a SNAP incentive program to be used on specialty crops at farmers' markets. The program sought to build the capacity of markets and their SNAP programs and to create a coordinated outreach effort.

[Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.]

The Fresh Bucks program pilot drew on a growing local and national interest in healthy produce and local foods. The start of this project coincided with the announcement of the 2014 USDA Food Insecurity Nutrition Incentive Program (FINI). FINI provides monetary incentives for SNAP users to purchase fruits and vegetables, through programs like Fresh Bucks. Diverse stakeholders and markets from across the state collaborated to submit a proposal. This built new collaborations and sparked conversations about a state-wide farmers' market association.

[If the project built on a previously funded project with the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB describe how this project complemented and enhanced previously completed work.]

This project was not built on any previously funded SCBCP or SCBG-FP project, nor did we earn any interest on the funds or amend our grant request.

PROJECT APPROACH

[Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the Work Plan of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.]

In line with the work plan submitted in the proposal the main activities and tasks performed during this

grant period included: (1) facilitating the Fresh Bucks match at the Indy Winter Farmers' Market, Original Farmers' Market, Broad Ripple Farmers' Market, Binford Farmers' Market, and Crooked Creek Farmers' Market. SNAP expenditures on specialty crops increased by 925% compared to the estimates from 2012; (2) organizing 2 stakeholder meetings quarterly, one for participating market masters and an advisory committee of partners; (3) collecting and analyzing weekly performance data for SNAP and Fresh Bucks use on specialty crop sales from all participating farmers' markets; (4) developing monthly updates and an annual report for coalition partners to track and monitor progress towards goals; (5) developing outreach materials that highlighted the availability of Indiana-grown specialty crops for SNAP users; (6) launched the FreshBucksIndy.com website, which includes a recipe blog and receives an average of 11 visits per day; (7) facilitating demonstrations on the health benefits of locally-grown fruit and vegetable consumption, which is estimated to have reached over 1,000 individuals; (8) executing a marketing and outreach plan that included: a direct mailing to more than 61,000 SNAP users in Marion Co., distributing materials to over 30 social service organizations, representation at school and community events, and a partnership with IndyGo that included bus ads, radio, and TV spots; (9) conducting over 100 surveys of customers and market vendors to determine the impact of the program.

[If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.]

The incentive distribution process was designed to benefit specialty crop producers. Fresh Bucks could only be used on specialty crops. In addition to distributing these tokens for match dollars, they were also distributed for the SNAP dollars they matched; this ensured that the SNAP dollars also benefited specialty crop producers. SNAP users could also choose to receive market tokens that could be used on any SNAP eligible product. Vendor surveys indicate that non-specialty crop vendors also saw increased sales in SNAP during the pilot program.

[Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.]

The partners and stakeholders found that once the program had started, monthly meetings were not necessary. Instead regular digital communications and quarterly meetings were sufficient. These mechanisms managed to advise the program and solve problems that arose in an efficient manner. Throughout the course of the pilot year the staff members at Butler Center for Urban Ecology and the Indiana Healthy Weight Initiative associated with Fresh Bucks left their respective organizations. This caused those two organizations to take a lesser role with the program. However additional partners joined the team, making up for the loss. In addition to assisting with conducting outreach for the program, partners (except for Butler Center for Urban Ecology) attended either market master or advisory committee meetings, which advised the formation of the program.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

[Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.]

Goal 1: Provide SNAP beneficiaries better access to Indiana-grown specialty crops at farmers' markets.

Outcome: During FY2014 \$16,591.50 worth of SNAP was spent at 5 Indianapolis farmers' markets. Specialty crop producers received \$10,410 of these SNAP dollars and an additional \$8,090 in Fresh Bucks, making their total profit from SNAP \$18,500. This represents 69% of the total SNAP spent at participating farmers' markets. **Goal 2:** To increase the amount of specialty crops that SNAP recipients consume. **Outcome:** 82% of SNAP customers surveyed reported purchasing more specialty crops and 95% reported shopping at the farmers' market more. **Goal 3:** To provide additional revenue and increase

the market share of SNAP dollars for the specialty crop sector at farmers' markets. **Outcome:** Specialty crop vendors sold \$18,500 to SNAP users in FY2014. In October, the Fresh Bucks coordinator and volunteers surveyed 51 farmers' market vendors about their experiences with the Fresh Bucks and SNAP program. 53% saw an increase in SNAP sales. 74% of the specialty crop producers reported increased sales.

[If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.]

Goal 4: By increasing knowledge of Indiana-grown specialty crops and how to prepare them we will promote purchasing of the products. **Outcome:** Advertising materials for the Fresh Bucks program highlighted Indiana-grown specialty crops and where to purchase them.

Goal 5: Increased knowledge of how to prepare specialty crops. **Outcome:** Fresh Bucks Indy helped facilitate four nutrition education events: at the Back-In-School Carnival we distributed about 500 Indiana-grown apples and recipes cards with directions on how to prepare specialty crops; a cooking demonstration at the Binford Farmers' Market reached over 120 customers; and Fresh Bucks supported two cooking demonstrations by the Tindley Accelerated Schools Cooking Club at the Indy Winter Farmers' Market. These cooking demonstrations have reached upwards of 200 people.

[Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.]

We were pleased to see that the increase in specialty crops consumed by SNAP users was higher than expected. Specialty crop producers also received a higher portion of SNAP dollars than expected. While the rest of our final numbers did not meet the goals set out at the beginning of the process, we still feel we accomplished the overall goal of the program, which was to increase SNAP usage at farmers' markets, particularly for specialty crops.

[Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.]

Participating markets saw a 350% increase on SNAP usage. In 2014, Indiana farmers' markets and direct-to-market farmers saw SNAP purchases increase by 157% to \$78,171, compared to the previous year. While participating markets only accounted for 7% of the total SNAP authorized markets and direct-to-market farmers, they accounted for 21% of the SNAP sales.

BENEFICIARIES

[Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.]

Three main groups benefited from the Fresh Bucks pilot program: SNAP users, specialty crop producers, and farmers' markets. SNAP users were able to purchase more fresh, local food. Indiana-grown specialty crops and farmers markets became more accessible. In FY2014 there were 822 SNAP transactions at the participating farmers' markets. Based on the frequency of SNAP customers shopping at the farmers' market we estimate this was about 400 unique customers. Fresh Bucks helped to increase the sales of specialty crop vendors at participating farmers' markets. During the survey process we talked to 27 vendors. However, because this was conducted in October, many vendors had ended their market season. We estimate that this program benefitted at least 50 specialty crop producers. New customers were attracted to the five participating farmers markets, creating a new customer base for the markets and their vendors.

[Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.]

Approximately 50 specialty crop vendors participated in the Fresh Bucks program in 2014. These vendors received \$18,500 in SNAP sales during this project. SNAP usage increased by 350% at participating farmers' markets.

LESSONS LEARNED

[Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.]

We learned a good deal from our first year implementing the Fresh Bucks program. One of the biggest takeaways was the amount of interest in the program. Potential stakeholders from across the state have expressed interest in bringing Fresh Bucks to their communities.

However, we did fall short of the goals we set. We feel that we overlooked a few major factors in growing a new program. It can take time to build up a large customer base and brand recognition. It takes multiple exposures before people adopt something new. We feel that next year's outreach will build on this year's, attracting more people to the market.

We believe our efforts went well the first year, however, we suspect that extenuating factors limited the possible growth. Due to an abnormally cold spring, farmers did not bring as much product to market. Additionally, there are still a limited number of specialty crop vendors at Indianapolis farmers' markets. This may be discouraging to SNAP customers and might have contributed to SNAP customers not returning or suggesting the program to their friends or family.

[Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.]

The Fresh Bucks program has continued at farmer's markets in the Greater Indianapolis area. It has expanded to 13 markets, including both summer and winter farmers' markets.

Farmers' Markets aren't the answer to getting SNAP customers more produce. Only operating Fresh Bucks 13.5 hours out of the week during peak season—huge barrier.

The program was complicated with only specialty crop \$\$s being doubled, which may have made the program less likely to be utilized.

[If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.]

Farmers' markets are only in operation for a total of 13.5 hours per week in peak season, which is a significant barrier for SNAP customers who would like to purchase specialty crops at the markets. While Fresh Bucks utilization continues to increase, the numbers will likely never be as high as our target goal because of access issues. We also learned that a simple, easy to understand program is critical to the success of Fresh Bucks. Since the end of the grant period, we have streamlined the process for SNAP and Fresh Bucks usage at markets, which has improved customer satisfaction.

BUDGET

Items:

Paid:

Allotted:

Contractual – Marketing & Design Firm	\$18,142	\$36,000
Marketing & Design Firm - Signs	\$1,687.50	\$36,000
Marketing & Design Firm – Photography	\$400	\$36,000
Marketing & Design – Printing (handouts and annual report)	\$655	\$36,000
Marketing & Design—Bus advertising	\$4,951.30	\$36,000
Marketing & Design – Website	\$398.16	\$36,000
Nutrition Education and Outreach – Recipe cards and apples	\$94.81	\$4,000
Market Reimbursements	\$6,536.50	\$10,000
Total Awarded:	\$50,000	
Total Expended:	\$32,865.27	

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION<http://freshbucksindy.com/>**CONTACT PERSON**

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Project Title: Purdue Farm to School

PROJECT SUMMARY

Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.

The objective of this project was to expand the farm to school movement in Indiana using specialty crop fruits and vegetables to make the farm to school effort recognizable, with consistent and translatable practices, and create a market for increased specialty crop goods across the state. Our goals were to identify interested school districts and producers, then to match school districts with local producers growing specialty crops already used in the daily food menu.

Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.

The national farm to school movement is a rapidly growing model for introducing school children to local foods and local farmers. Indiana formed an interest group in the spring of 2012 composed of producers, local chefs, school district food service directors, food distributors, state employees from Departments of Health, Education and Agriculture, and Extension specialists in specialty crop marketing and production from Purdue University. Our first two goals, from our 2013 SCBG, have been accomplished, those being to hold a farm to school workshop at the Indiana Horticulture Congress in 2013 and to generate a survey to gauge interest and activity among school district food service directors and specialty crop producers. Based on preliminary data from our survey and experiences thus far, Indiana school food service directors are eager to learn more, and a large proportion of our producers are ready to explore this avenue as an additional means of local income and marketing for their specialty crops.

If the project built on a previously funded project with the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB describe how this project complemented and enhanced previously completed work.

A representative group from the advisory board of the INFSN attended the Farm to School workshop held in Ohio in March of 2013 and gained tremendous momentum through learning their approaches and success regarding running a state-wide network, incorporating novel local food outreach into schools, and involving an increasing number of producers. We were now ready to expand the previous farm to school project using specialty crop fruits and vegetables to make the farm to school effort recognizable, with consistent and translatable practices, and create a market for increased specialty crop goods across the state.

PROJECT APPROACH

*Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the **Work Plan** of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.*

For this project, we were tasked with the following goals:

1. Increase the number of food service directors interested in obtaining local fruits and vegetables for use in school lunch menus
2. Increase the number of specialty crop producers in Indiana interested in supplying fruits and vegetables to their local school corporation(s)
3. Increase the number of contracts between schools and specialty crop producers for use in school lunch menus
4. Increase knowledge among stakeholders of Indiana public school corporations for using local fruits and vegetables in school lunch menus by creating a marketing display that specifically addresses the value of local fruits and vegetables in school lunch menus

5. Increase the ability of the Indiana Farm to School Network to plan for evolving needs for local fruits and vegetables in Indiana school corporations by developing a written “future steps” plan for use by school districts throughout the state

We accomplished the following:

1. Working with the Indiana Farm to School Network, we have increased the number of schools participating in Farm to School programming – therefore offering local fruits and vegetables in the school lunch menu – to 662 schools. Schools obtain local fruits and vegetables direct from local growers, from local food hubs or cooperatives, or from distributors, such as Piazza, that have worked with the Indiana Farm to School Network and local growers to include more local fruit and vegetable choices. These counts come from a survey conducted by personnel on our grant as well as the Indiana USDA census data.
2. By attending the annual Indiana Horticultural Congress the past three years, walking through local farmer’s markets, and cold calling producers, we have obtained surveys of interest from 83 producers. Of those, 68 have expressed interest in working with schools to sell their fruit and vegetable produce.

****Putting these two sources of data together, we developed a Google Map** that is usable by both food service directors and producers. Food service directors can access the map to locate producers in their area who are interested in selling produce to local schools; producers can access the map to find schools in their area interested in buying local fruits and vegetables. In addition, the map shows food service directors and producers other areas of interest, such as education, field trips, etc. The Google Map can be found at

<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zdc4dFAtbbn8.kkyDIB1aB-Yg>

3. The Farm to School program has not developed contracts within Indiana. With the advent of the Micro-Purchase, Food Service Directors now have the option of “trying out” local produce by purchasing less than \$3,500 from a producer. The micro-purchase does not require any bid process at all. Food Service Directors can make contact with any local producer they choose and buy without constraints. The Informal Bid, or “three-bids-and-a-buy” process, allows Food Service Directors to bid only to three vendors – which can include local producers, food hubs, or co-ops. These are for bids up to \$150,000. This is another good avenue for local producers to connect with schools. We have given three presentations on these processes: the Indiana School Nutrition Association annual conference in October 2015, the Indiana Farm to School Network annual meeting, “Fed, Fired Up, and Fueled,” and the Indiana Horticultural Congress in January 2016. These meetings allowed us to make contact with Food Service Directors, Producers, and others interested in the Farm to School movement in Indiana. While we cannot document an increase in contracts in Indiana, we feel confident there is an increase in partnerships between producers and schools over the last three years. We know Wea Creek Orchard is partnering with the Lafayette School Corporation, Tuttle Orchards is partnering with Lawrence Township Schools, and Metzger Family Farm and River Ridge Farm are partnering with Manchester Township School District. There are many others I could name.
4. We developed a bus display that is roughly 16.5 feet long and 11 feet deep and includes additional sections not attached to the bus: a table for doing a vegetable and fruit counting and sorting activity for young children and another table for crayon rubbings showing various areas in Indiana for specific fruit and vegetable production. The bus itself depicts a section of fun facts about fruits and vegetables, a section for producers on how to become involved in Farm to School, a section on the components of Farm to School – selling, field trips, education in the schools, classroom/school gardens, etc., a section on seasonality, more hands-on activities for students: a fruit and vegetable color sorting activity for young children with information about the health benefits of various colorful fruits and vegetables, and a portion sorting activity for

children to determine which size is the true portion size of various fruits and vegetables. This bus has been at the Indiana State Fair for the last two years, has been in all the Clinton County elementary schools for the last two years, has been in Lafayette's Imagination Station (children's science museum) the winter of 2015-16, was at Purdue University's Discovery Park 10th Anniversary Celebration, has appeared at the Fed, Fired Up, and Fueled 2015 event, and Piazza's 2015 Food Party Celebration, as well as Fuel Up to Play 360's 2015 event. We can definitely say the bus has been a hit! ☺ I've attached a photo of one side of the bus – what you see through the bus is the arena where it was displayed – not part of the bus.

5. Working with the Indiana Farm to School Network, we have developed a toolkit for producers and for Food Service Directors interested in participating in Farm to School activities. The toolkit can be found on the Indiana Farm to School Network webpage:

<http://www.doe.in.gov/nutrition/farm-school>

This toolkit includes information for Educators, Preschools, Food Service Directors, and Producers. In addition, it provides background for Farm to School, and Links for Resources for: Finding, Procuring, and Menuing Local Foods

Food Safety

School Gardens

Curriculum

Planning Kit Mailing Lists

Facebook Page

This provides a wealth of information, resources, and contacts for those interested in starting, continuing, or broadening their Farm to School programs.



If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

The project only targeted specialty crops – fruits and vegetables.

Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.

The IFSN Steering Committee provided oversight as it developed throughout the state. It provided connections to both producers and food service directors, although its greatest source of connections was food service directors. Purdue Extension provided strong supportive connections with producers in the state of Indiana. It also provided a venue for education through the Indiana Horticultural Congress. This venue allowed for collection of producer surveys as well as educating producers about farm to school programming and efforts. Indiana Departments of Health, Education and Agriculture supported this program through their efforts on the IFSN Steering Committee. Wea Creek Orchard and the Lafayette School Corporation provided an opportunity to test our programming on actual food service directors and producers before taking anything into the field.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.

See Project Approach above. It outlines all goals and accomplishments.

If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.

All outcomes were accomplished during the course of this grant proposal. However, the bus continues to be loaned to organizations throughout the state through the Purdue University Extension program, and the Google Map is still available for producers and food service directors to utilize for connecting to one another.

Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.

The only goal not accomplished in the project is Goal 3: Increase the number of contracts between schools and specialty crop producers for us in school lunch menus. As stated earlier, with the advent of the Micro-purchase, food service directors now have the option of trying local produce by purchasing less than \$3,500 from a producer. Food service directors make contact with local producers without constraints. Should they decide to purchase on a larger scale, they move to the Informal Bid (“three-bids-and-a-buy”) process with that producer. A contract may be signed at the end of this process, but the time restraints of the grant did not allow us to move that far in the process.

Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

We completed 20 food service director interviews out of our anticipated 28. Cooperation for the 45-minute interview was difficult. Food service directors are extremely busy, and we offered no incentive for participation.

We completed approximately 90 of 180 anticipated producer surveys. Many producers are not interested in farm to school participation due to perceived state reporting regulations.

Rather than develop 3 marketing displays, we chose to develop one large display worthy of display at the state fair in Purdue’s Extension display section.

We met our target to work with IFSN to develop a state-wide toolkit for Farm to School. It is available on the IFSN webpage.

Highlight the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms.

We developed a google map that connected interested food service directors with interested producers. As new interested parties become available to us, they are added to the map. We developed a school bus display depicting aspects of production that is utilized all over the state and will continue to be due to its connections with Purdue's Extension department. We have given six presentations at state programs on the information gained from this grant project – barriers to farm to school and ideas on how to overcome them.

BENEFICIARIES

Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

IFSN benefits from our help on the toolkit and our work disseminating information about farm to school. Several school districts and other organizations have benefitted from use of the school bus display. Indiana Horticultural Congress has benefitted from our presentations for the last two years. Countless producers and school food service directors benefit from use of the Google Map developed by this project.

Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

While we cannot document an increase in contracts in Indiana, we feel confident there is an increase in partnerships between producers and schools over the last three years. We know Wea Creek Orchard is partnering with the Lafayette School Corporation, Tuttle Orchards is partnering with Lawrence Township, and Metzger Family Farm and River Ridge Farm partner with Manchester Township Schools. There are many others. Who knows how many access the toolkit on the IFSN web page, or the Google Map created by the project. We believe there are many seeking advice about how to become involved in farm to school in Indiana and are making use of the resources available to them.

LESSONS LEARNED

Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.

One of the greatest lessons learned is that it is much more difficult to get participants that planned. We had hoped for more survey participants that we were able to obtain. Other than that, this is one of the most productive projects I have worked on. The positive results of the bus display, tool kit, and the Google Map have been incredible. The ability to present this information around the state at conference meetings, to spread the word about farm to school, and to see connections growing has been inspiring.

Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.

There were no unexpected outcomes or results.

If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

Regarding survey participation, plan for small numbers of participants.

Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Rather than design three small displays, we chose to develop one larger display. That ended up being a very wise move. The larger display is of the caliber to be displayed at the state fair. It is interactive, suitable for young children and adults. Going for better quality, with fewer designs, was the right move. We spent the same amount of money, but got more return in terms of positive response to the display. The display will be used for many years to come due to its connections with Purdue Extension. Three

smaller displays would not have the connection to Purdue Extension and would be in a storeroom somewhere now.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide additional information available (i.e. publications, websites, photographs) that is not applicable to any of the prior sections

N/A

CONTACT PERSON

Name: Lisa Kirkham

Number: 765-494-2424

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Project Title: Joshua Academy

PROJECT SUMMARY

Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.

Joshua Academy had participated in a study whose results showed our students were showing an early propensity for childhood obesity. The school's health and wellness coordinator strategized that we needed to find a way to improve the quality of school lunches, to improve the quality of snacks and treats offered to students, and to regularly provide fresh fruits and vegetables for our students.

In addition, the school's founder (who owned a goat farm) had researched the successful use of project-based learning to instruct students. It was decided to combine these two issues and create an agricultural program at Joshua Academy using project-based learning. There was a separate modular classroom on the school property that had a fenced in flower garden. We learned from other research that children were more inclined to eat what they grew. It was decided to seek funding for an agriculture teacher and to begin to write curriculum for the program. It was extremely important to incorporate Indiana Academic Standards to justify the use of instructional time. The curriculum would include reading, writing, math, and science standards. There would be a big emphasis on vocabulary and science.

Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.

The obesity study was the impetus for the creation of the agriculture program along with the school's founder belief in the benefits of project-based learning approach. When the school founder asked some of the children what they wanted to grow one student responded "pizza"!

If the project built on a previously funded project with the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB describe how this project complemented and enhanced previously completed work.

This was the school's first specialty crop grant.

PROJECT APPROACH

Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the Work Plan of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.

Year 1

Hired an agriculture teacher, Ag teacher and Asst. Principal of Curriculum and Instruction began writing the curriculum. Supplies and materials were purchased to build 35 raised-beds and an aquaponics system. We already had three hydroponic units. Seeds and plants for a variety of specialty crops were purchased. A compost bin was built. Tools and lab tables were purchased to turn the modular into a classroom lab. The Ag staff (Ag teacher, school founder, and principal) went for G.A.P. training. The school founder assisted in the construction of the raised-beds and pretty much all things needed to launch the new project-based program. The school cafeteria management company (Aramark Education) agreed to buy all the lettuce we could produce for use in the school cafeteria. We investigated adding a greenhouse at the Joshua Academy Training Center (the school founder's farm) to increase lettuce production. By the end of harvest season all raised-beds were producing crops and we held three Farmer's Markets during the first year of production at the school site. Our collard greens and cabbages were family favorites. We also hatched chickens and provided beautiful brown eggs to our families and staff. When it got cold outside we moved growing inside using our hydroponic units and the aquaponics system. The students grew bib lettuce.

Year 2

We repeated what we had learned during the first year growing specialty crops. It was decided the greenhouse was not feasible because the farm was too far away (45minute drive). Each grade level 1st-6th grew, harvested, ate, and sold their specialty crop. We once again held three Farmer's Markets. The students handled the task more independently this year. We struggled with the indoor growing dealing with mite infestations to all the fish dying. We learned from our mistakes and are looking forward to trying again. During both years the students ate some of what they grew in a variety of ways (salads, kale chips, homemade dill pickles, cooked greens to name a few). We learned that developmentally that some of the program expectations were too challenging for K-3rd grades and will make adjustments.

If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

Anything not specifically used to grow specialty crops was purchased from the school's general fund. We specifically used the grant to get our specialty crops growing, harvested, and sold at the Farmer's Market. We also used the grant to prepare our crops for consumption by the students. This was no easy task since at this time every grade level participated in the program. The school cafeteria helped us prepare vegetables to be sampled by students.

Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.

The school founder played a key role in seeing to the successful implementation of the Ag program. The staff from the Joshua Academy Training Center was also very helpful. They built or assembled everything we needed for the program. 4-H provided information and also did some programming at the school. Their focus was the benefits of agriculture and introducing the students to 4H and all it had to offer. Aramark Education committed to buying our lettuce but we weren't able to make the greenhouse at the big farm happen. The Urban Seeds organization donated seeds to the program and volunteered time to help with the raised-beds.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.

- We did hire an Ag teacher.
- We have an Ag curriculum with a specialty crop focus.
- We have all the equipment and tools to continue the program which we currently still doing.
- We grew many different specialty crops at the school for the students and their families.
- Students (73%/4th-6th) can identify specialty crops by sight. Students (81%/4th-6th) can identify garden tools by sight.
- Students ate what they grew (or at least tasted). Student's families (100%/K-6th) had access to inexpensive fresh produce.
- Our Farmer's Markets were hugely successful (3 per year).
- Student's (66%/K-6th) agriculture vocabulary increased significantly.

If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement.

- We are into our 3rd year of the program and are continuing the Ag program without the grant this year.
- We have an Ag curriculum.
- Students now realize that "Agriculture Feeds the World" and use content vocabulary appropriately and in context.
- The majority of students can identify crops by sight and know how to plant and harvest specialty crops in raised-beds or using hydroponics or aquaponics

Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.

- We have a documented Ag curriculum
- We hired an Ag teacher
- The majority of students can identify specialty crops by sight
- Students grew, harvested, and supplied specialty crops to school families

Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

- We have a documented Ag curriculum
- We had a full time Ag teacher for the two years of the grant
- We continue to grow specialty crops at the school
- We continued to host Farmer's Markets for our families
- 100% of students tasted or ate what they grew
- We have 35 functioning raised-beds at the school
- We can grow specialty crops indoors hydroponically and aquaponically

Highlight the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms.

100% of students tasted or ate specialty crops

- We hired an Ag teacher
- We have a documented Ag curriculum
- We provide 100% of our families access to fresh produce
- 66% of students increased their agricultural vocabulary
- 73% of students in grades 4th-6th can identify specialty crops by sight
- 100% of students helped grow specialty crops

BENEFICIARIES

Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

- All students at Joshua Academy benefited from this program
- Joshua Academy families benefited from this program
- The overall school academic program benefited from this program

Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

- 216 students (entire student body) at Joshua Academy were beneficiaries of this project
- 150 families at Joshua Academy were beneficiaries of this project
- 29 staff members were beneficiaries of this project
- The money made from the Farmer's Markets were re-invested back into the program. We made \$326.00 from six Farmer's Markets

LESSONS LEARNED

Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.

- Students do enjoy project-based instructional opportunities.
- Students do enjoy Ag in the classroom.
- You can successfully incorporate reading, math, writing, and science standards using agriculture.
- Ag teachers are hard to find.
- K-3 students needed a scaled down introduction to agriculture. We were able to find components they could do and understand successfully. We were able to get them growing.

- The internet provides a wealth of agriculture ideas. We didn't have to re-create the wheel totally.
- Farming takes a lot of work and is high maintenance.
- Students will eat what they grow or at least try it especially if they help prepare it.
- There are many agriculture career opportunities that most students don't know anything about.
- Agriculture offers a wealth of vocabulary enhancing opportunities.

Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.

- Other people from the neighborhood and community wanted our produce.
- The teacher needs strong classroom management skills to do effective project-based learning.

If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

We achieved our project goals but K-3 students required a lot of supervision. K-3 may be too early an age for this level of participation. Sufficient attention and background knowledge is needed.

Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

Many students had little background knowledge in regards to planting and harvesting. We basically started from square one with most of the students. Students now understand where food comes from and the work it takes to produce it.

We need to change our K-3 approach.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.joshuaacademy.com

CONTACT PERSON

Name: Pamela Decker

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Project Title: Food Hub Feasibility Study

PROJECT SUMMARY

Provide a background for the initial purpose of the project, which includes the specific issue, problem, or need that was addressed by this project.

The Indiana Food Hub Feasibility Study was designed to provide the funding for a professionally conducted study to assess the economic impact and potential development of economically viable food hubs in target areas across the State of Indiana.

It was envisioned that such facilities would offer regional farmers an opportunity to expand the production and marketing of specialty crops. The data collected determined target areas to support the aggregation of these products as well as provide access to all the relevant processes necessary to increase production and sales on a wholesale and retail level. In addition, such an initiative could offer new and diversifying farmers access to educational resources and bring a focus to the history and current importance of diversified agriculture to the economic sustainability of the state.

Describe the importance and timeliness of the project.

At the time the project was conceived, there appeared to be strong potential to increase the economic viability and sustainability of many current and new/beginning farmers with adequate grower production and marketing support facilities and services. The study was able to bring together factual findings to provide stakeholders (county leadership, farmers, consumer groups, and agency staff) a strong foundation on which to decide if the risks exceeded the benefits of such regional programs.

At this same time, the Hoosier Harvest Market food hub was beginning to see significant success. This market is an on-line ordering system which aggregates product from a variety of farmers in one geographical section of Indiana. As we saw the reach and success of the Hoosier Harvest Market, questions arose about the feasibility of a statewide-reaching system.

If the project built on a previously funded project with the SCBGP or SCBGP-FB describe how this project complemented and enhanced previously completed work.

It did not build upon previous work.

PROJECT APPROACH

*Briefly summarize activities and tasks performed during the entire grant period. Whenever possible, describe the work accomplished in both quantitative and qualitative terms. Specifically, discuss the tasks provided in the **Work Plan** of the approved project proposal. Include the significant results, accomplishments, conclusions and recommendations. Include favorable or unusual developments.*

Tasks included:

- Project launch meeting to develop detailed work plan
- Meeting with Advisory Team to obtain input for the detailed work plan
- Analyzed Indiana USDA Ag Census data referencing specialty crops
- Review previous reports and web-based research related to the subject (case studies from other states, USDA food hub resources, etc.)
- Prepared materials and facilitate 12 regional input sessions throughout the state
- Wrote and conducted on-line survey of consumers, producers, and wholesalers in the state of Indiana
- Conducted planned interviews with affected/interested individuals
- Reviewed results with Advisory Team and wrote final report

- Conducted Regional Public meetings to disseminate results

Full details of results are available in the final report from the consultant. Overall recommendations included:

- Launching a Virtual Indiana Food Hub Network
- Explore a sub-hub model for the Hoosier Harvest Market
- Streamlining policies and procedures
- Marketing Indiana Specialty crops and regional food hubs
- Creation of Food Hub Planning Resources

If the overall scope of the project benefitted commodities other than specialty crops, indicate how project staff ensured that funds were used to solely enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops.

The study focused exclusively on specialty crops. In the end, other crops would likely benefit from the work which was done, but our focus was limited to just specialty crops.

All wording in the surveys referenced specialty crops, the producers surveyed were limited to specialty crop producers, and the producers/organizations who were invited to attend the input sessions were specialty crop only.

Present the significant contributions and role of project partners in the project.

ISDA worked with two project partners on this project. First, we obtained the assistance of a research firm to conduct the research aspects of the project. The firm was Thomas P. Miller and Associates.

Second, we created an Advisory Committee to solicit input and direction on the wording of the study questions and documents and provide overall strategic planning. The committee included two individuals from our research partner, the ISDA Economic Development Project Manager, a Purdue University Extension Educator, an Indiana Farm Bureau representative, an individual who works with co-ops throughout the state on best practices, and the ISDA Specialty Crops Program Manager.

GOALS AND OUTCOMES ACHIEVED

Describe the activities that were completed in order to achieve the performance goals and measurable outcomes identified in the approved project proposal or subsequent amendments.

- Facilitated 12 regional input sessions throughout Indiana with participation from a variety of stakeholder groups including producers, community leaders, institutional buyers, elected officials, and economic development organizations.
- Released surveys, compiled and analyzed responses from 800+ consumers, 70 producers, and 10 wholesalers
- Conducted 1:1 interviews with wholesalers, current leadership of food hubs, and institutional buyers
- Completed research and analysis of specialty crops in Indiana utilizing information from the USDA Census of Agriculture
- Looked at food hub models/networks for other states
- Prepared final study incorporating findings and making recommendations

Full details of all findings from the study are included in the Additional Information section.

If outcome measures were long term, summarize the progress that has been made towards achievement. The long term outcome measures are indirect with no quantitative data. We would look to interpret the progress by the number of farmers involved in producing specialty crops in Indiana and an increased percent of sales of Indiana specialty crops. Such data will be available in future years using USDA data. Other indirect outcomes may include:

- Result in the development, funding, construction, staffing, and subsequent operation of six to eight regional food hubs across the state of Indiana.
- Increase the number of farmers and/or increase production and marketing of specialty crops into the current food chain.
- Increase the income of specialty crop farmers who are marketing to the hub either retail or wholesale.
- Increase the number of specialty crop farmers across the state.
- Increase the number of consumers who have access to regionally produced, nutritional and safe specialty crops.
- Enhance the economic vitality of the state.

Provide a comparison of actual accomplishments with the goals established for the reporting period.
Initial Goals included:

- Identification of existing Specialty Crop production and marketing infrastructure and potential projected capacity.
- Identify current demand for regionally grown specialty crops through various market channels (retail/wholesale) and determine whether those demands are currently being addressed and met.
- Develop a framework for local marketing strategies.
- Disseminate information to the local public officials regarding the significant role that agriculture plays in the economy of the state today and for the potential growth and security which can come from agricultural diversification, increasing the number of farmers, adding value to raw farm products, and in the collaboration of farmers, consumers and local government.
- Documentation of the investigation process to serve as a template for future expansions and development in other areas across the state.
- Develop the framework to initiate regional food hubs, either virtual or physical, in targeted locations across the state, with the potential of six to eight aggregation points.
- Identify state and local laws, rules and ordinances relating to food hubs and food distribution in the targeted areas.

All goals were met. Details for all goals are in the study's final report document.

Clearly convey completion of achieving outcomes by illustrating baseline data that has been gathered to date and showing the progress toward achieving set targets.

In the study's final report document, specialty crop sales data is aggregated, data from the input sessions and surveys is detailed, and summary findings are compiled. Current food hub activities are detailed, and recommendations are provided for future food hub expansion activities.

Highlight the major successful outcomes of the project in quantifiable terms.

- Completion of approximately 800 consumer response surveys

- Initial survey findings indicated that 30% of respondents were already familiar with the term “food hub.” As a part of the survey, all others were provided with a definition of food hub to continue the survey. Therefore, 70% of survey respondents have an increased awareness and knowledge of a potential food hub network.
- Completion of surveys from 70 specialty crop producers
- Completion of surveys from 10 wholesale buyers
- Conducted 12 regional input sessions to facilitate an in-depth discussion on the development of food hubs
- Collection of data relating to specialty crops
- Creation of framework documentation which can be used in the planning of potential food hubs

BENEFICIARIES

Provide a description of the groups and other operations that benefited from the completion of this project's accomplishments.

The study results, project summary, and final report have all been made available to the general public by posting on the Indiana State Department of Agriculture's website. An entire website page is devoted to food hubs, and the research collected as a result of this study. Final Report Session where all the participants were invited to come listen to the results. Any organization which may now be considering the creation or expansion of a food hub has a framework of process to assist in their planning.

Clearly state the number of beneficiaries affected by the project's accomplishments and/or the potential economic impact of the project.

Four beneficiaries have been affected by the projects accomplishments. They include two food hubs, the Fort Wayne Food Network and Evansville's iGROWHERE, have directly benefitted from the results of this study, as they were able to use information from the food hub study input sessions to increase the reach of their new food hubs. For the future, as the food hub study process has completed, the awareness of potential opportunities is available and discussions are in the works for the development of new food hubs. These new hubs will increase the economic impact of specialty crops which will remain in our local area.

LESSONS LEARNED

- *Offer insights into the lessons learned by the project staff as a result of completing this project. This section is meant to illustrate the positive and negative results and conclusions for the project.*

There were 5 recommendations as a result of this study.

1. Findings from consumer, producer, and wholesaler surveys and the input sessions show interest in regional food hubs and the need for a network to connect their activities throughout Indiana. While interest in the concept is high, the number of launched and functional food hubs is low. The conclusion is that there is merit in building out a platform for promoting the activities of existing hubs, provide the ability for interested parties to maintain communication, and launch new food hubs. This can be accomplished by connections with Purdue Extension and a growth in the work they are currently doing.
2. Using the success of the on-line platform for the existing Hoosier Harvest Market, there is an opportunity to establish sub-hubs, as a way to build upon the existing infrastructure. Hoosier

Harvest Market has already begun to offer support to other areas of the state, and this should be further developed.

3. ISDA must begin work with the Indiana Department of Health to strengthen the sharing of information about requirements on food safety. This is being done with the implementation of training as a result of FSMA.
4. Marketing of Indiana specialty crops and food hubs needs to be increased. This can be accomplished through the use of the Indiana Grown brand.
5. ISDA should compile resources for Food Hub planning. At this time, this information is available on the ISDA website on a separate food hub landing page.

Describe unexpected outcomes or results that were an effect of implementing this project.

There were several unexpected outcomes from this project. First, in the process of collecting data, consumer preferences were identified and a consumer definition of “locally grown” was obtained. Next, other groups had begun the process of working on food hubs, but ISDA was unaware of those activities until the input session. This study had the effect of bringing a statewide awareness to the subject and to existing activities surrounding food hubs. Lastly, ISDA determined that there was little encouragement needed from the state to begin this process on a local level. Local organizations are able to provide the support necessary to develop food hubs locally, and they are interested in doing so. They are able to use the planning documents from this study to continue their development.

If goals or outcome measures were not achieved, identify and share the lessons learned to help others expedite problem-solving.

State laws were identified which impact food hubs, but the study was not able to go to the level of local ordinances to determine if local laws could affect the implementation.

Lessons learned should draw on positive experiences (i.e., good ideas that improve project efficiency or save money) and negative experiences (i.e., lessons learned about what did not go well and what needs to be changed).

One challenge for this project was to be able to get to a broad reach of the public for the consumer surveys. ISDA would have preferred a broader audience, but it was difficult to get the surveys into the hands of those who were willing to complete it.

In some geographical areas, attendance at the food hub input session was low. We are unsure if it was due to a lack of interest in those areas, or that the day/time of the input session did not allow for attendance.

Lastly, the study could have benefited from more time in certain regions of the state to fully understand their current status and the plans for future implementation.


BUDGET

Items:	Paid:	Allotted:
Consultant Contract	\$78,723.00	\$82,244.92
Total Awarded:	\$82,244.92	

Total Expended:	\$78,723.00
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Provide additional information available (i.e. publications, websites, photographs) that is not applicable to any of the prior sections




THOMAS P. MILLER & ASSOCIATES

ISDA Food Hub Feasibility Study

Project Summary

Project Activities

Regional Input Sessions



- Facilitated 12 regional input sessions throughout Indiana with participation from a variety of stakeholder groups including producers, community leaders, institutional buyers, elected officials, and economic development organizations (Locations included Batesville, Columbus, Crawfordsville, Elkhart, Evansville, Fort Wayne, Indianapolis, Lafayette, Muncie, New Albany, Valparaiso, and Vincennes)
- Released surveys and compiled and analyzed responses from 800+ consumers, 70 producers, and 10 wholesalers
- Conducted one-on-one interviews with wholesalers, current leadership of food hubs, and institutional buyers
- Completed research and analysis of specialty crops in Indiana utilizing information from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Census of Agriculture
- Looked at food hub models/networks for other states
- Prepared final study incorporating findings and making recommendations

Key Data Findings

Indiana has **58,695** farms and **\$11.21 Billion** in total sales. The data breaks down as follows:

- 2.4%** Percent of farms in Indiana that grow vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes (1,399 farms). This accounts for 0.9 percent of total sales (\$104.4 million)
- 1.5%** Percent of farms in Indiana that grow nursery, greenhouse, floriculture, and sod (888 farms). This accounts for 1.0 percent of total sales (\$110.8 Million)
- 90%** Percent of food is sourced from out of state, yet Indiana has the 7th largest market value of crops when ranked among the 50 states (over \$7.5 Billion in 2012)
- 30th** Indiana's national rank in specialty crop acreage with 63,252 acres. Of that acreage, the highest proportion is in vegetables, melons, potatoes, and sweet potatoes (59.3 percent; 37,498 acres) which ranks the state 21st nationally.
- 30th** Indiana's national rank in number of farms growing specialty crops. (2,935 farms)
- 23rd** Indiana's national rank of total market value of specialty crops grown. (\$587 Million)

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Survey Findings

Consumers (800+ from over 75 counties)

What does local mean?

- 39.9 percent of respondents indicated that local meant within 50 miles of its source and 23.6 percent indicated within 100 miles

What challenges do you have in buying local?

- 32.2 percent indicated price, 31.4 percent indicated not a good selection, and 30.0 percent indicated not sure where to buy

Would it matter to you if products are actually grown in Indiana?

- 63.9 percent indicated Yes, I'd be more likely to buy and 25.1 indicated Yes, but it wouldn't necessarily affect my buying

Where do you do a majority of your shopping for vegetables, fruits, nuts, herbs, and flowers?

- 49.2 percent indicated a national chain, 24.2 percent indicated a farmers' market, and 15.0 percent indicated a local grocery co-op.

Price and Access

- Consumers were somewhat likely (41.7 percent) or likely (30.7 percent) to pay more for locally specialty crops.
- When looking at a willingness to drive further for specialty crops, 41.4 percent were somewhat likely, 21.9 percent likely, and 21.8 percent likely once or twice a year.

Food Hubs

- Only 30 percent of Indiana consumers were familiar with the term "food hub" prior to taking the consumer survey.
- When looking at the presence of a food hub in a nice retail area, 40.6 percent of consumers indicated that it didn't matter and 36.1 percent said it was somewhat important.
- When asked about the importance of knowing that specialty crops are locally grown through a food hub, 40.9 percent indicated it was important and 35.7 percent said it was very important.
- When asked about specialty crops being inspected to a certain quality, 38.8 percent indicated it was important, 26.5 percent indicated it very important and 26.5 percent indicated it was somewhat important.

Producers (70 producers from 43 counties)

Operations

- Of Producers who responded, 35.7 percent had operations of 1-10 acres followed by 27.1 percent with 11-50 acres, and 12.9 percent with operations over 1,001+ acres.
- Of those operations, 64.3 percent were dedicating 1 to 10 acres to specialty crops with 14.3 percent dedicating 11-50 acres.

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- When asked about sales of specialty crops, 65.7 percent of Producers who responded indicated sales were under \$25,000.
- When asked if farming was there full-time occupation, 60.0 percent indicated no and 40.0 indicated yes. When asked how many additional staff they employ, 45.7 percent indicated they employ 1-5 additional staff and 38.6 percent indicated they do not employ additional staff.
- Specialty crops grown by a high number of Producers included tomatoes, peppers (bell), peppers (others), pumpkins, squash, cucumbers, and lettuce.
- When asked about specialty crops being sold to wholesalers now, 31.4 percent indicated they were selling direct to grocery stores and 15.7 percent to regional or statewide fruit/vegetable wholesalers. 72.9 percent responded other which included not selling to wholesalers and lots of participation in farmers markets and some direct sales to restaurants.

Locality

- 40.0 percent of Producers indicated that they looked at it within 50 miles followed by 32.9 percent within 100 miles.

Indiana Grown

- When asked about familiarity with the Indiana Grown program, 40.0 percent of Producers were aware of the program and 60.0 percent were not aware of the program.

Term 'Food Hub'

- When asked about familiarity with the term Food Hub, 64.6 percent indicated they had heard the term and 35.4 percent indicated they were not familiar with it.

Currently Selling to a Food Hub

- When asked if they currently participate in a food hub, on 7.7 percent of those who responded to the question indicated they were.

Best Way to Sell to a Food Hub

- When asked about selling specialty crops to a food hub, 36.9 percent indicated that they would like to participate in a regularly scheduled drop-off at one location and 23.1 percent indicated they would like a regularly scheduled pick up from a farm. When reviewing the other comments on how Producers would like to participate, key items that emerged included:
 - Regularly scheduled drop-off *and* pick up.
 - No interest in food hub.
 - Have trucks that pick-up from farms and drop off to retailers and wholesalers on a daily basis year round.
 - It would depend on distance to the drop-off. It would depend on the cost of the pick-up. Can we make a living selling to a food hub, with the wholesaler fee and extra fees from logistics?
 - Rarely have enough extra of a single product to participate.

Specialty Crops for a Food Hub

- When asked about their willingness to set aside a portion of specialty crops grown for a food hub, 46.2 percent were somewhat willing, 38.5 percent very willing, and 15.4 percent not willing.

Summary findings from comments gathered in the surveys about the barriers to selling specialty crops include:

- **Marketing** – lack of time to dedicate to marketing efforts and getting new customers.
- **Consumer Education** – challenges with consumers understanding what “in season” means.
- **Surplus of Product** – coming in from neighboring states and competition at local farmers markets, some with low customer base (too much produce for the market).
- **Working with Grocery and Super Stores** – challenging for small Producers to sell to them with enough volume and being able to get competitive prices.
- **Labor costs** – funding to pay for staff and lack of adequate labor force to harvest specialty crops
- **Seasonality** – access to a consistent season long market with less price variability.
- **Land and Infrastructure** – finding affordable land to expand and finances to build the appropriate infrastructure (coolers, storage, processing) and have people power at the needed times.

Wholesalers

A combination of surveys and one-on-one interviews were completed with Wholesalers. There were a total of ten surveys completed with the following responses:

- **Where Procurement Decisions are Made** – Central Indiana (5), Northwest Indiana (3), Northeast Indiana (1), and South Central Indiana (1).
- **Define Local** – Within 200 miles (2), Within State (2), Within 100 miles (1), Within 50 miles (1), Other (4) – wherever we can back haul from; 400 mile USDA definition; Regional, independent family Producers; do not use.
- **Local Purchases of Specialty Crops** – Less than 10 percent (3), 11-15 percent (1), 16-20 percent (2), 26-30 percent (1), 31-40 percent (1), and 91-100 percent (2) .
- **Wholesalers Current Market for Indiana Specialty Crops** – Less than \$50,000 (5), \$100,001-\$250,000 (3), \$1,000,000+ (2).
- **Estimate of current size of Local Food Market for Specialty Crops in Indiana** – Less than \$1 million (3), \$100+ million (2), \$1-5 million (1), \$6-10 million (2), \$11-25 million (1), \$51-100 million (1).
- **Interest in Sourcing More Local Foods** – Very Interested (6), Somewhat Interested (2), We do not have the flexibility to source locally (2).
- **Working with a Food Hub** – As a Wholesale Buyer (5), As a Cooperative (2), As a Co-Owner (1).

Summary findings from comments gathered in the surveys and through additional one-on-one interviews include:

The Term “Food Hub”

- Understanding how the state wants to define the term and possibly create standard operating procedures (SOPs) behind recognizing an entity as a food hub.

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- Communicating to Producers to help them clearly understand what a food hub is, how they can participate, and the potential monetary value for participation.
- Understand the margins and realistic expectations – let Producers know what they are getting into, requirements for participation (e.g. GAP certification, etc.) and how they can/cannot make money.

Food Safety and Regulations

- Streamline the process – ISDA can be one-stop shop for information on certifications and adhering to regulations and provide help in accessing those resources.
- Definition of regulatory category for food hubs – not case by case but clearly defined category to simplify across the state and avoid varying levels of recognition across county departments of health.

Wholesalers and Working with Food Hubs

- They do have an interest in purchasing locally/Indiana-raised, but they insist on necessary certifications, volume, and product pricing that is comparable to other sources they already have access.
- They recommend examining successful examples working with organized food hubs in other states that have these elements in place – just another channel for them to work through.
- Opportunities exist for backhauling – can bring items from one part of the state to another using existing routes working with food hubs.
- The existing wholesale network could aid in education that Producers need about the wholesale industry and possibly help build knowledge capacity among farmers and hub organizers.

Institutional Buyers (Hospitals/Universities)

- Value having a wholesaler/distributor that provides reliable access, product variety, product volume, competitive pricing, and necessary certifications.
- Food hubs can be part of this if they have these items in place.
- Most institutional buyers said they still want to buy through their existing wholesaler.
- Institutional buyers will be an extremely challenging customer for a new food hub or even a food hub network.

Farm to School (Public and Private K-12)

- Help educate their food buyers to understand realistic specialty crops that schools can purchase, volume, and what time of year – plan accordingly working with the school corporation.
- Educate Producers on necessary food safety requirements and regulations.
- ISDA could assist with promotion about Farm to School and knowledge about farm to schools.
- An opportunities exists to learn more about this area: There is so much we don't know; the census is a base point, but we still don't know what schools are doing-there could be an additional study and work to find out specifically what schools are doing and where they would go with food hubs.
- There could be more/faster/easier access to this wholesale market directly from a food hub than the institutional buyer.

Education to Producers

- Understand the price of admission – necessary requirements, volume, etc.

- Small Producers express distinct interest in food hubs, larger Producers already selling wholesale not as much.

Challenges with Specialty Crops

- Available workers for picking – labor intensive process, challenging to source trained workers.
- Not enough volume of specialty crops in Indiana – relying on products from other states (primarily Michigan to fill in orders).
- Convincing conventional corn/soybeans/livestock Producers to diversify their crop mix by adding specialty crops or adding specialty crops is not easy.

Support from ISDA

- Producers widely see a possible role of ISDA is one of helping them understand regulations and requirements – assistance taking Producers through the process to better understand Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and in building wholesaler relationships/contracts.
- Marketing assistance from the state – continue to push specialty crops and what is grown in Indiana and connect growers with buyers.
- Setting up the model for how to create a food hub and doing the job of getting the word out about how these can work and making it easier for groups that want to organize to put their own hubs together and enable a way for them to interact or network. The idea that ISDA provides templates or examples is commonly desired.

Value of the Food Hub Network

- Mentoring opportunities – new foods hubs paired with existing food hubs.
- Promote Indiana Grown – name recognition and marketing for Indiana specialty crops.
- Backhauling – way to coordinate linkages with distributors and other food hubs to connect transportation of specialty crops throughout Indiana.
- Identify champions within each region as output from this study – accelerate implementation of the concept.
- Online retail – another avenue, one-stop convenience.

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